DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 190 691 UD 020 751

AUTHOR	Hart-Nibbrig, Nand
TITLE	The Politics of School Desegregation: Los Angeles.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	11 Apr 80
CONTRACT	NIE-P-79-0118
NOTE	118p.: Maps may not reproduce well.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Board of Education Role: City Officials: Community Role: Court Role: Desegregation Plans: Elementary Secondary Education: Government Role: Minority Group Influences: *Political Influences: *Politics: *Public Officials: *School Community Relationship: *School Desegregation
IDENTIFIERS	*California (Los Angeles)

ABSTRACT

This paper chronicles important events surrounding the desegregation of Los Angeles public schools, focusing on underlying political factors and roles of various individuals and community groups in the desegregation process. The author's principal contention is that Los Angeles schools remain segregated because powerful individuals and groups have effectively coalesced to prevent effective desegregation. First, the history of the city's school desegregation plan is reviewed and its current features described. The roles of the School Board, the Superintendent, the court system, local and State political officials (such as the mayor and city council, the governor's office, the State legislature, and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education) are discussed. The impact of a 1969 court case, Crawford vs. Los Angeles Board of Education, and its subsequent appeal on the maintenance of racial segregation in the city's schools is explained. Minority (black, Chicano, and Jewish) community leadership is also discussed in relation to desegregation politics, and the unlikelihood of a coalition between these groups is cited as weakening their already limited possibilities for bringing about desegregated schools. Finally, some of the problems and prospects of metropolitan (interdistrict) desegregation and the general political future of school desegregation in Los Angeles are considered. (GC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

NIE-P-79-0118

UD

JUN 9 4 1980

ED190691

THE POLITICS

OF

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION: LOS ANGELES

By

Nand Hart-Nibbrig, Ph.D.

UD020751

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Nand Hart-Nibbrig

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

April 11, 1980

All Publishing Rights Are Reserved to the Author and The

National Institute of Education

Nand Hart-Nibbrig, Ph.D.

JUN 1 3 1980

The Researcher and Author of the Study

Nand Hart-Nibbrig is currently an associate professor of Public Administration at West Virginia University. During the academic year of 1979-80 Professor Hart-Nibbrig was a visiting scholar in the Center for Public Affairs at Arizona State University. While at the Center he taught courses in public policy analysis both at the University and at the Navajo Nation.

Much of the research for this monograph was conducted during the academic year of 1978-79 while Professor Hart-Nibbrig was a visiting scholar in the Political Science Department at the University of Southern California.

Prior to coming to U.S.C., Professor Hart-Nibbrig analyzed the politics and decision-making processes involved in desegregating the public schools of Seattle, Washington. His articles on School Desegregation in Seattle were published by the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of Washington, Integrated Education and in a forthcoming volume of essays on public policy issues in Washington State.

Professor Hart-Nibbrig was born and raised in Los Angeles. He received his B.A. and M.A. degrees in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.) and his Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the brother of Harold C. Hart-Nibbrig, J.D., a former attorney for the N.A.A.C.P. in the Los Angeles desegregation case, Crawford vs. the Los Angeles School Board.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	ii
Introduction	1
The Los Angeles Desegregation Plan	8
School Desegregation and the Political Process	27
Community Politics and School Desegregation	69
Metropolitan Desegregation	94
The Political Future of School Desegregation in Los Angeles	102
Bibliography	106

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

There are many people whose names are not mentioned in this monograph who have freely given of their time and energy in an attempt to enlighten me on so complex a matter as understanding school desegregation in Los Angeles. At the top of the list is my brother, Harold Hart-Nibbrig, who while counsel for the N.A.A.C.P. gave tirelessly his considerable talent to the school children who remain today in segregated schools. Likewise a special thanks must go to Joseph Duff, N.A.A.C.P. attorney, Mark Rosenbaum, A.C.L.U. attorney, John and Laree Caughey whom we all recognize and respect for their unwavering concern and commitment to remove the shadow of slavery from our children.

A special thanks are extended to William Trombley of the Los Angeles Times, who in my opinion, must be the best informed newspaper reporter on school desegregation in the country. Likewise I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to the National Institute for Education for their support and encouragement.

Although I take full responsibility for the substance of the text, I readily acknowledge my personal debt to Mrs. Pamela Eck for her insightful, careful, not to say considerate job of editing my many rambling thoughts.

None of this could have been possible if I did not have the love and support from my life-mate, Barbie Taylor.

PREFACE

This paper, unlike most focused on school desegregation, attempts to underline the political dimensions of the issue. In more specific terms this paper not only chronicles some of the important events surrounding the desegregation of Los Angeles Public Schools, but focuses on some of the underlying political factors; the role of the School Board; the Superintendent of Public Education; the court system and the parties at dispute in the Crawford Case as well as the overlay of local and state political office holders such as the Mayor of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles City Council, the Governor's Office, the State Legislature, and the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Education. Included also in this monograph is a description of the role of various community groups. These include the black, chicano and Jewish communities as well as those groups constituting what may be the strongest grass-roots movement in Los Angeles County, anti-busing groups, most prominently the San Fernando based organization of Bustop.

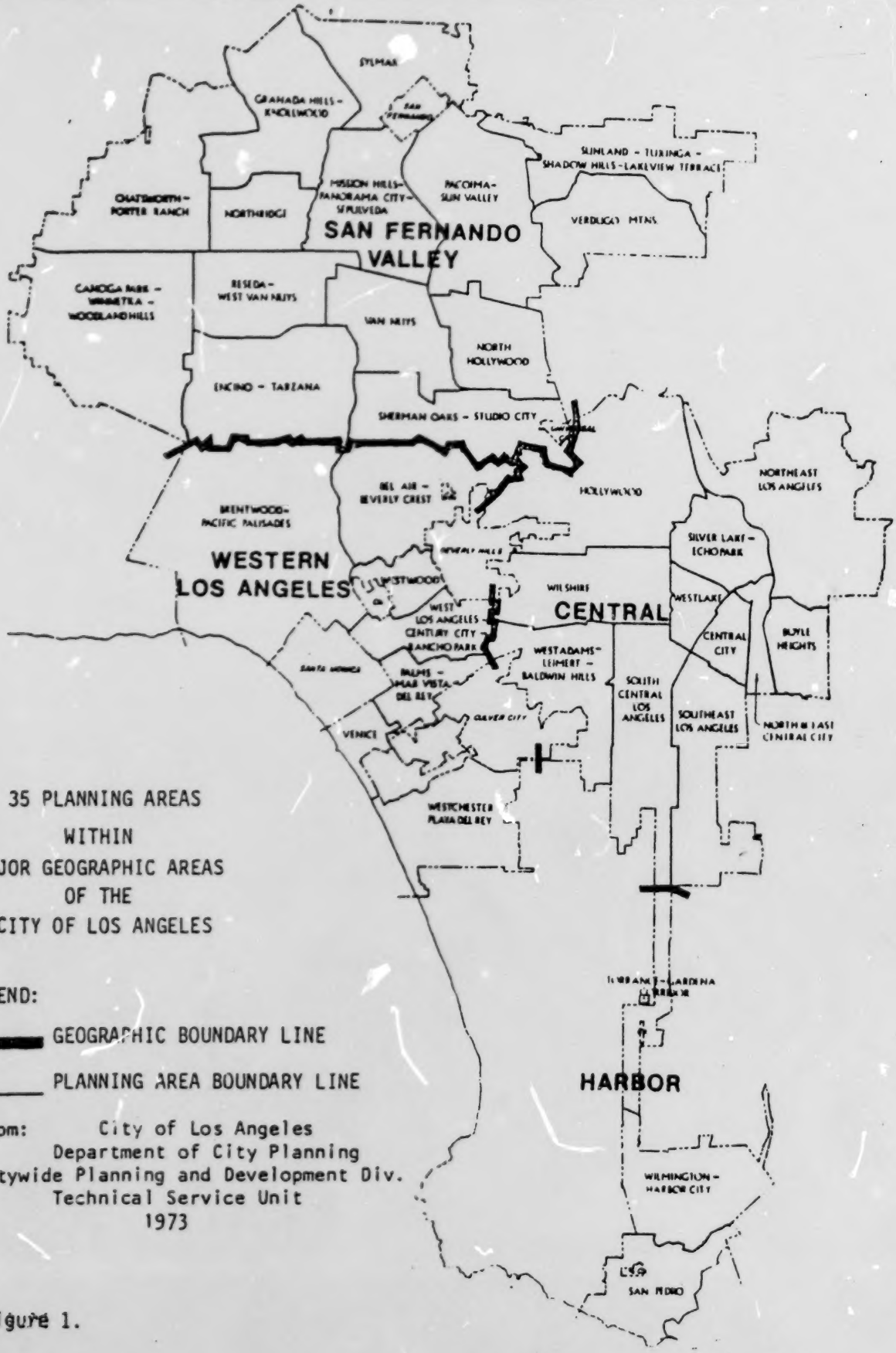
It is a mistake to regard anti-busing groups like Bustop exclusively in the context of school desegregation and that red herring of an issue, mandatory, or as busing opponents prefer, forced busing. In many respects anti-busing organizations and their supporters represent the cutting edge of a deepening conservative movement in Los Angeles, California and the United States in general. The brushfire rapidity of the appeal of California's tax cutting Proposition 13 continues to burn throughout the country's fiscal coffers possibly signifying a decade of not only intensified racial and ethnic

conflict, but class conflict as well.

The physical and economic expansion that has characterized much of this country's history, as well as the American political structure, has kept open class conflict at a minimal level. This may no longer be true in the coming era of diminishing resources.

It is within this broader context that the politics of school desegregation is considered.

A final word. What follows perhaps could best be described as an interpretive essay. It is an attempt not only to depict a yet unfinished process, but also to venture opinion and analysis of such a complex and dynamic process. For these and other reasons that should become clear, this monograph reflects the author's political and philosophical perspective on desegregation itself.



35 PLANNING AREAS
WITHIN
MAJOR GEOGRAPHIC AREAS
OF THE
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

LEGEND:

GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARY LINE

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY LINE

*From: City of Los Angeles
Department of City Planning
Citywide Planning and Development Div.
Technical Service Unit
1973

Figure 1.

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the sprawling megalopolis that is Los Angeles, California. With over 3 million people blanketing approximately 464 square miles it is in fact the third largest city with respect to population and has the heaviest per capita concentration of cars in the world. In sharp contract to the easy-living image so carefully nurtured by local publicity mills, Los Angeles is distinguished also by one of the most segregated school systems in the United States.

The monograph is about school desegregation and the attempts to desegregate the Los Angeles Unified School District. Specifically, it is about the politics of desegregation. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) formally operates independently of the Los Angeles county and city governments and covers 710 square miles including within its boundaries 10 other independently-incorporated cities. The LAUSD is the second largest school district in the country with a budget of $1.56 billion. As of February 1979, it was attempting to educate approximately 550,000 pupils daily, most of whom, despite 16 years of court litigation, remain in racially segregated schools.

This study will explore the reasons for the pattern and practice of school desegregation in Los Angeles. The persistence of segregation in Los Angeles appears to have less to do with the much-discussed financial costs and logistical problems associated with busing students than with politics. Powerful individuals and groups have effectively coalesced to prevent effective desegregation.

The prognosis for the future is from this author's point of view not very bright. At this time it appears that schools will for all practical purposes remain segregated because the governmental system from the governor on down to the local governments concerned is manned by people who are leaning with the winds of political expediency.

This study represents the first attempt at describing and analyzing a political process focused on interaction of political leaders in desegregating a large metropolitan-like school district.

As a case study it will reveal what is particularly unique about the levels of governance and the political process which impact the principal actors in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Because the LAUSD is "metropolitan" in scope it will foster understanding and insight into the politics of coming to grips with what may be the next wave of legal assault on racially segregated schools in metropolitan areas. What is happening in Los Angeles may, indeed, be a precursor for what can happen in other urban areas.

No treatment of school desegregation in Los Angeles could occur without some indication of the significance of one of the truly startling developments not only in Los Angeles but in the state as a whole, the changing demographics of the public schools.

Following national patterns, the white or anglo population appears to have stabilized and presently is on the decline. This is due to at least two factors: white families are having fewer children and they are continuing their flight out of the Los Angeles Unified School District.[1]

Presently they represent approximately 27 percent of the district's pupils. The black population now at 24 percent and holding steady seems to be stabilizing somewhat. (See Figure 2.)

The real "growth" continues to be among Chicanos, presently at 44 percent of the school district and growing. The Chicanos population has exceeded most growth estimates and will continue to be the largest category of school children in Los Angeles.

Politically speaking these trends would suggest increased political power of Chicanos over time. Even though Chicanos have a preponderant presence in the LAUSD, they now manifest little political power to affect the public policy process which by their numbers they may well one day dominate.

Much of what constitutes the public-policy process focuses on the judicial system and specifically the political aspects of judicial decision-making in California. The roles of attorneys as advocates and adversaries as well as the role of judges will be examined from a political perspective. This monograph assumes that judicial decision-making is a part of the political process and is inherently conservative. The consequences for minorities will be examined and analyzed within this context.

The problem of desegregating the Los Angeles Unified School District does not fall exclusively within the rubric of any single political or governmental jurisdiction. Problems associated with school desegregation are enhanced because federal, state and various local governments have the capacity to impact this process. What happens within

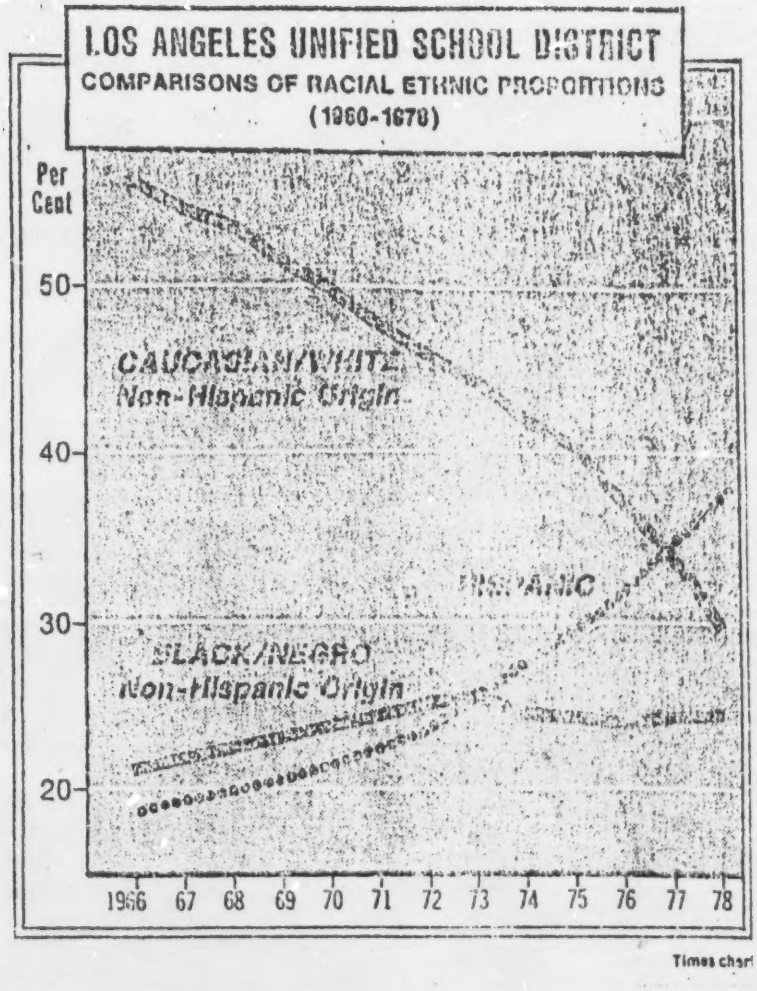


Figure 2.

Source: Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 4, August 13, 1979.

the school district is as much the concern of those who man other political offices as of those in decision-making positions within the school district itself. Intergovernmental aspects of school desegregation are highlighted in California, by focusing on the roles of the chief executive of the state down to local governments.

The political role of Mayor Thomas Bradley is of particular concern because: 1) he is the first black mayor in Los Angeles' history and 2) his role suggests the constraints in this city upon a black mayor who has to depend for financial support upon the wealthy "Westside", primarily white, Jewish, liberal, and Democrat. Likewise an examination of the role and impact of the current Superintendent of Public Instruction, Wilson Riles, also black, provides insight into the politics of accommodation where school desegregation is concerned.

The Los Angeles School Board, characterized as successfully fighting meaningful attempts to desegregate the public schools is now firmly controlled by an anti-busing majority. A recent installation of a district system of electing board members and a profound conservative turn among voters evidenced through the passage of Proposition 1, the anti-busing constitutional amendment, offers little solace for those expecting more support for those who must face re-election this year.

The political process of school desegregation effectively absorbs the activities of several key elements in the community. Minorities predisposed toward desegregation are not effectively organized and attentive to the political process as it affects them. Added to this

are serious rifts among Chicanos, Blacks, and Jews. The politics of each community will be analyzed in order to explore the source of problems among and between them and the prospects for future coalition.

Any effort to enlarge the scope of mandatory busing in Los Angeles must confront head-on one of the most powerful "grassroots" attempts to stop mandatory busing. The political strength of individuals like Bobbi Feidler and the anti-busing group she helped create, Bustop, have grown and merged with other conservative forces to present a major bulwark against any effective school desegregation.

It is now evident to many who advocate mandatory busing as well as to those who oppose such a policy that efforts at desegregation cannot be confined exclusively to the boundaries of the Los Angeles district boundaries. If Los Angeles is to desegregate effectively, relief must be achieved outside district boundaries.[2]

Anti-busing groups are being organized in neighboring Orange and Ventura Counties anticipating what may indeed be the next legal move by attorneys representing the ACLU and the NAACP. The immediate political future for metropolitanism is not bright. The spirit of Milliken vs. Bradley has increased the burden on civil rights lawyers seeking metropolitan relief.

The argument that demographic and financial pressures are converging in such a way as to cause increased awareness and need to consolidate into larger school districts is rejected on political grounds.

Those with preponderant influence in a highly fragmented metropolitan arena (white middle class suburbanites) will continue to reject the so-called advantages of consolidation for continued hegemony over the school system where they send their children.

The prospects for the future suggest that minorities and their political allies will not soon find a metropolitan solution.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Farley, Dr. Reynolds. Report to Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles, on Case # 822 854, Crawford vs. Los Angeles Board of Education, p. 37-38.

2. Pettigrew, Dr. Thomas. Report to Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles, on Case # 822 854, Crawford vs. Los Angeles Board of Education, November 14, 1978, p. 109-110. (Also see Dr. Gary Orfield, Report to the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Los Angeles, on Case # 822 854, Crawford vs. Los Angeles Board of Education, November 14, 1978, p.92.)

THE LOS ANGELES DESEGREGATION PLAN

The story of desegregating Los Angeles' public schools began in 1963 when the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the NAACP filed a suit in Superior Court in Los Angeles alleging that two high schools, Jordan, virtually all black, and Southgate, an all-white high school, though a mile from one another, had been separated in order to maintain their respective racial character.[1]

Not much occurred from 1963 to 1968. Undoubtedly, the momentum built up during the years of the civil rights movement had been dealt a severe blow by the urban riots, the growth of black power and racial and ethnic re-identity. In 1969 the trial of the case finally began before Judge Alfred Gitelson's Court, Crawford vs. LA Board of Education. After several months, Judge Gitelson, early in 1970, ruled that Los Angeles Unified School District was segregated intentionally and officially (de jure), and not just as a result of the de facto segregated housing patterns. The fact that the Los Angeles School District was found to be intentionally engaged in official acts of maintaining a segregated school system has continuing significance and will be discussed later in this monograph.

The school district immediately appealed the desegregation order issued by Gitelson and, after a long period of delay, the California District Court of Appeals in Los Angeles overturned almost every aspect of Judge Gitelson's earlier decision.

Without hesitation, the plaintiffs appealed the case to the State

Supreme Court. In June of 1976, the Court upheld the original finds in the Gitelson decision and reiterated the Gitelson ruling that regardless of its cause, de jure or de facto, the burden to desegregation rests upon the school district. The decision not only affected Los Angeles, but the neighboring San Bernardino School District as well. Desegregation was to be done in the words of the Court by means that are "reasonable and feasible". What was to be judged as reasonable and feasible was to be determined by the Superior Courts concerned with implementation of the decision, which of course is where the matter now rests. What seems clear at this point is that the presiding judge, Paul J. Egly seems to be hesitant in facing this problem.

Early in 1977, Superior Court Judge Egly was assigned to conduct hearings on the School Board's plan, which had been developed to meet the Supreme Court's mandate to desegregate the public schools of Los Angeles. Prior to being assigned to this case Paul Egly was a practicing attorney in Corina, California, a judge in the Citrus Municipal Court and since 1968 a Superior Court Judge. A plain-spoken man popular with lawyers in the Pomona and San Gabriel Valley, Egly presided over a school desegregation case in San Bernadino in 1972. From that case he gained the necessary experience to tackle a more complex and demanding case in Los Angeles.

In some respects, the fact that virtually no other Superior Court Judge in Los Angeles County had "volunteered" to take this case coupled

with Egly's background made him a likely prospect.

Judge Egly was assigned to the case for the purpose of overseeing the desegregation process in Los Angeles Schools. His job was to make sure the desegregation process would take place with all reasonableness and feasibility. He was to do whatever was necessary to get the school board to begin a process desegregation in the school system. If the school district refused to do this, he (Egly) then had the option to take over the task of desegregation himself in order to make sure it was carried out.

The School Board Reacts

The school board, in late 1976 and early 1977, produced a desegregation plan now known as Plan A, which was essentially a plan for part-time learning centers. That is, a limited number of students in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades would attend what was touted to be integrated learning centers for part of the day and for part of the school year.

For 13 weeks in the Spring of 1977, Judge Egly heard testimony on Plan A. At the end of the hearings, he stated in rather unequivocal terms that the Los Angeles school board did not meet the constitutional mandate of Crawford because it did not desegregate a single school in the district. He then ordered the school board to come back within 90 days with yet another plan.

In October, 1977, the Los Angeles School Board returned to Judge Egly

a plan which is presently in effect in the Los Angeles School District. This plan involves grades 4-8 and has many voluntary features, i.e., magnet schools and the permit with transportation program. For all practical purposes, the PWT program is a voluntary program used primarily by minorities, most of whom are black. The program involves the movement of minorities from predominantly black and chicano school children to schools in the San Fernando Valley and Westside of Los Angeles.

The mandatory program which involves the pairing and clustering of schools included initially 129 schools, 116 of which are elementary; 13 are junior high schools. Grades 1-3 and 9-12 were excluded from the plan. The School Board, under the leadership of Board President Howard Miller, proposed that predominantly white and minority schools work out their own voluntary pairings before they were mandatorily paired with other schools.

The idea of allowing voluntary pairings would cause its own set of problems. Schools which were closer to one another chose each other as desegregation partners. That left everybody else to form pairs and clusters at a considerably greater distance. When the district cut-off dates for voluntary pairings arrived, it meant that those schools not yet paired were to be mandatorily paired, including schools from South Central and East Los Angeles and the central San Fernando Valley. From 30-40 schools would be so affected.

The factor of travel time will be seen later as one of the important points of opposition by anti-busers in their attempts to halt the mandatory aspects of the Los Angeles school desegregation plar

In February of 1978, Judge Egly accepted the Board's second plan, an important first step. Further judgment could be withheld as to whether the plan met the constitutional mandate.

The go ahead was given and the Board was therewith required to come back by December 1978 to make necessary corrections in the plan, presumably to expand and accelerate school desegregation. At the same time, Egly appointed eight (8) experts of national and local reputation to report to him on the state of desegregation in Los Angeles under the Board's plan.

In November of 1978, four (4) of the eight experts, having looked at the whole plan, said essentially that the plan was not done very well, that the pairs and clusters should be undone, and that more desegregation could be achieved with shorter bus rides. Their basic finding is worth noting. And that was, only a certain amount of desegregation could be achieved within the Los Angeles School District because there were not enough white students to go around. They proposed that initial steps, i.e., planning and "voluntary" metropolitan desegregation could facilitate a process of inter-district desegregation.

In March 1979, the School Board came back with a scaling back of the plan which now is being implemented in the district, a plan which, by the way, both proponents and opponents find wanting in many important respects. The Board proposed eliminating at least seven minority schools (and 4,000 students) from the mandatory portion of

the plan, and said that all existing pairs and clusters would be reviewed by the Board before they went into effect in the upcoming Fall (1979).

Judge Egly's quick response was to charge the Board with acting irresponsibly, but as seemed so typical of his behavior with respect to the Board, he asked the Board lawyers to produce specifics of this new voluntary plan.[2]

On October 11, 1979, the Los Angeles School Board produced in a sketchy 11-page document its newly approved all-voluntary desegregation and submitted it to Judge Egly. By doing so the Board all but abandoned its mandatory plan adopted less than two years ago.

With these recent events as immediate background a new round of hearings began in Judge Egly's court presumably to decide the future of mandatory busing to achieve desegregation in Los Angeles. This new round of hearings is being conducted against recent emergence of clashes in Boston and a federal threat to sue the city of Chicago over a failure to desegregate its public schools.

Perhaps more importantly for the immediate impact on the conduct of these hearings, two weeks after these hearings began, Los Angeles County voters ran up a 74% yes vote on Proposition I, commonly viewed as an anti-busing referendum.[3]

Nature of the Current Plan

The desegregation program now in effect in the Los Angeles School

District is a combination of voluntary and mandatory elements. The voluntary part of the program consists of 46 magnet schools with 10,700 students enrolled. Five thousand, eight hundred (5,800) are minority, the remainder white. As a general proposition, the magnet progress has not been successful in attracting white students into them.

There are a few notable exceptions to this sprawling school district. One example has been the 32nd Street School located near the University of Southern California in downtown Los Angeles. The 1978 enrollment showed that there were 28 white students and 625 minority students in the school. The percentage ratios were 16 percent and 84 percent respectively. The success of the program is relative; In 1978, the minority enrollment was 98 percent.

Among the factors contributing to the success of this program are the USC label and connection, the amount of work that has gone into the program, the fact that math, science, the performing and fine arts are built into the curriculum. The resounding fact is that whites for the most part have not voted with their feet by sending their children into or near minority neighborhoods. Again, only one out of 17 magnet schools show any significant white enrollment. The fact that they are located in minority neighborhoods dominates all other facts.

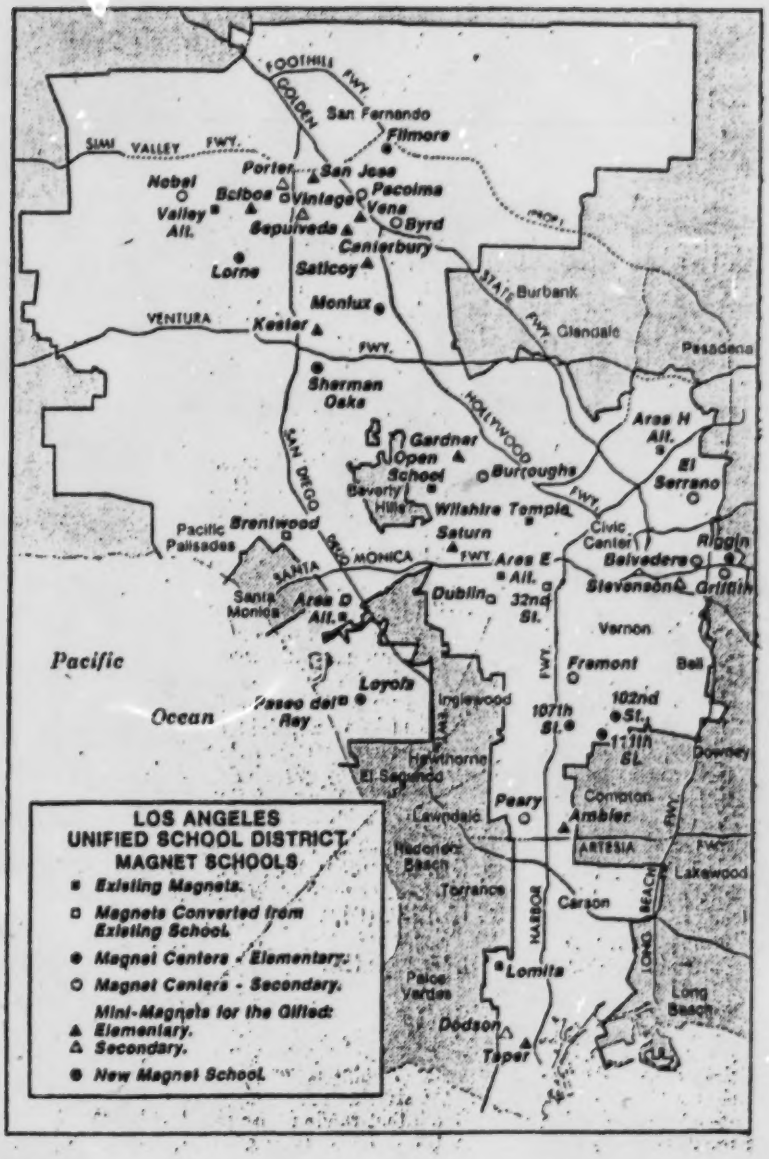
There are no magnets at the senior high levels. It is interesting to note that it is precisely here that research indicates that if

magnets are going to work, they work best.

The court-appointed monitoring committee selected to oversee the desegregation process has declared the magnet school program largely a failure given the money and support supplied by the district. All 46 magnet schools have a 70 percent or more minority enrollment.[4] In addition, a majority of the magnet participants are not those students in racially isolated schools for whom the program was designed, but instead the children of middle class minority parents.

Nevertheless, the School Board insists that magnet schools are an enormous success and planned to add more in the Fall, 1979.[5] The reasons for such a stance, I dare say, have more to do with political and social reasons than with desegregation effect. This, then, is the source of the real "pattern and practice" of desegregation in Los Angeles public schools--or, as John Caughey has so insightfully asserted, a master plan for segregation, not integration. (See Figure 3.)

Another aspect of the voluntary program of the current plan is the permits with transportation. PWT, as it is called among those conversant with such matters, has been in existence for 12 years and presently affects 18,500 students, all but 200 of whom are minority students in 150 receiving schools.[6] Most students in this program came from black and Chicano known areas of the city to Westside and San Fernando Valley Schools. Like the previously described magnet program, PWT does not attract appreciable participation. It works only as a way of desegregating white schools in middle and upper class



Times map by Don Clement

Figure 3.

Source: Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 1, June 26, 1978.

neighborhoods in the San Fernando Valley and the predominantly white and politically powerful westside. These statistics demonstrate the character of the situation. In the 1978-79 school year, according to the court appointees monitoring committee, 77% of the enrollment in PWT was black, 17.5% was Hispanic, 4.3% Asian and 1.2% was white.

Minorities taking part in the program feel that they are getting better educations than they would otherwise be getting. The problems seem clear enough, however. First, it is virtually a one-way program. Most of the traveling is done by minorities, primarily black. Much of this is done quite willingly.

Another problem associated with PWT is that it tends to skim off from minority neighborhoods some of the most academically talented students. It also pulls 35 schools over the 30 percent minority line for a desegregated school.[7] The School Board's definition states that a school is desegregated if 30 percent of the student body is minority. Keep in mind that most of the 35 schools are either on the Westside or San Fernando Valley. It means, among other things, that much vocal political opposition to the desegregation program was avoided by the politically beneficial effects of the PWT Program. This fact was certainly anticipated by the recently recalled Board President, Howard Miller, the chief political architect of the current plan.

The plaintiffs in the Crawford Case, i.e., the ACLU, NAACP, and

the Center for Law and Justice, feel the PWT, in fact, creates a sanctuary for these schools. On the other hand, the Board of Education stated that PWT was its most successful program and will try to expand it from roughly 20,000 to 45,000.

Judge Egly, in 1978, placed a cap for 1979 of 20,000 on the PWT Program. The Board was able to get 18,500 students to participate in the program.

The Mandatory Plan

By far the most controversial aspect of the Los Angeles desegregation plan are its mandatory provisions. The plan in outline is rather simple to comprehend. What is difficult to understand from an "educational" and desegregation perspective is why some of its provisions were designed the way they were. The best way to understand the desegregation plan is to see it as a political document rather than one attempting to achieve integrated, quality education in Los Angeles.

The most important questions raised initially concerning the mandatory plan continue to have relevancy. The most important were and are: why did the Board exclude the most segregated parts of the district, leaving untouched approximately 100 schools in the South-Central black ghetto and the Mexican-American barrios on the East side of the city. Why was desegregation in senior high schools limited to magnet programs?[8]

In essence, the mandatory aspects of the Board's plan consist

of pairs and clusters of various schools. The plan only covered grades 4-8 and include 116 elementary schools and 13 junior high schools. No senior high schools, of course, were included. (See Figure 4.)

The dimensions of the plan can be seen with additional statistics. Keeping in mind that there were approximately 595,000 students in the entire district when the plan went into effect, only 41,000 students were included in 129 schools. Of these 41,000 students, 14,-700 were Anglo (White), 26,300 were minority. Depending on what planning tool was used, this was 10 to 20 thousand students fewer than anticipated in the program. The school district kept changing its estimates in late 1977 when it became clear that many whites were removing their children from the public schools. Whether the mandatory plan is successful or not to some extent is a matter of subjective judgment. Some schools apparently are successful if measured by such indices as high enrollments, teacher and staff enthusiasm, etc.

Others are not doing so well. It is difficult at best to know whether a desegregation plan is working well. If white participation is the major criterion for gauging the success of the program, then it is fairly clear that it is the major problem of the Los Angeles Plan. This is evidenced by the fact that the greatest number of whites fleeing the school district corresponds with those grades affected by the plan. White flight from the participating grades has been estimated at 31 percent. Thirty-one percent of the white population is missing from grades 4-8 who would otherwise be in the mandatory program.

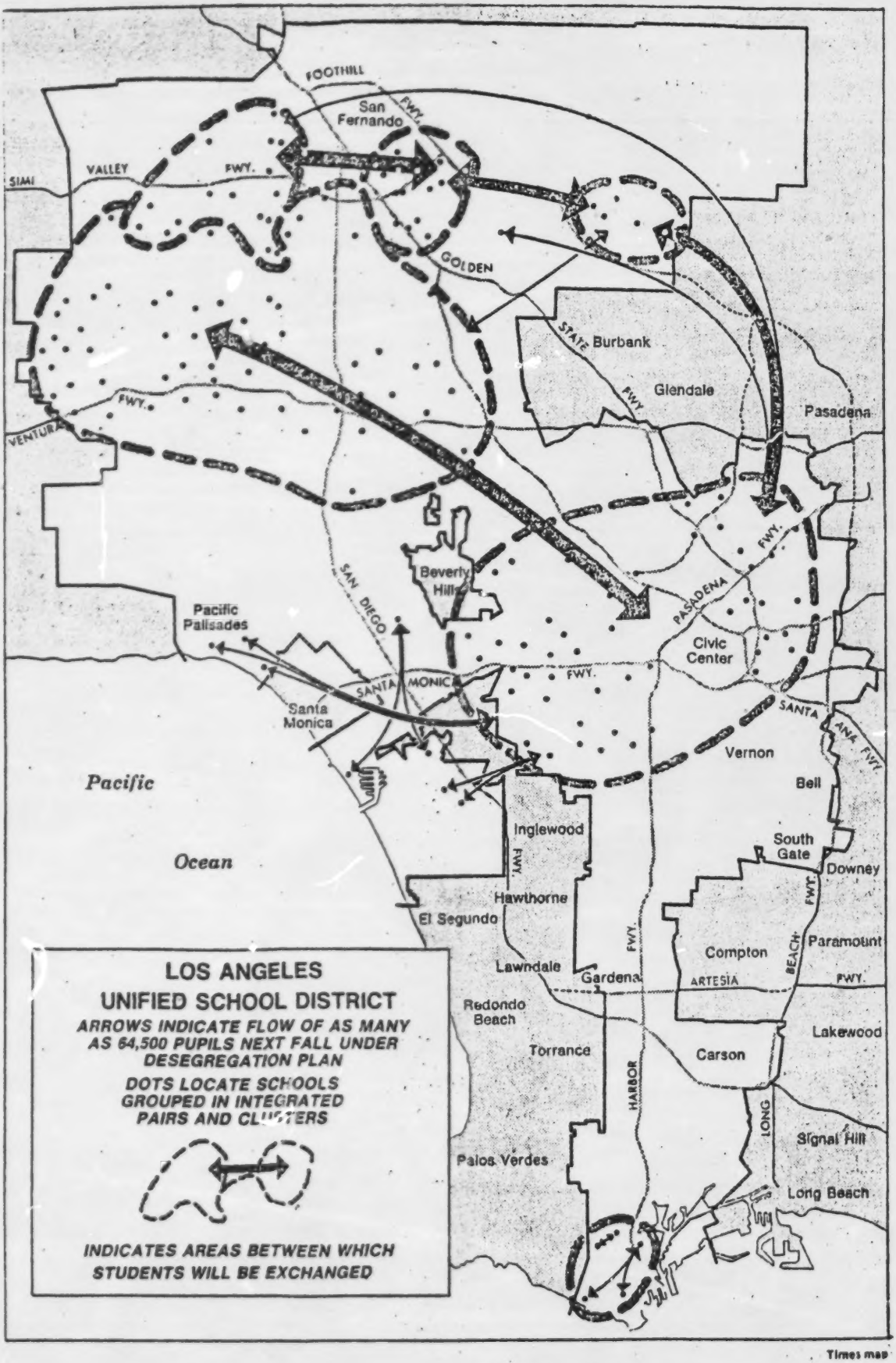


Figure 4.
Source: Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 8, June 26, 1978.

Vermont Avenue School in central Los Angeles, with 7 percent white, and 36th Street School with 10 percent white attendance seems fairly typical of the Anglo response to mandatory desegregation.

There are a few successful exceptions to this rule. For example, Baldwin Hills School, a predominantly black middle-to-upper middle class school, participates in a successful cluster with Canyon and Pacific Palisades in the upper-middle-class Westside. All three schools, it should be noted, are respectively high on the socio-economic ladder. The cluster had "benefitted" likewise from lots of exchanges among school staffs and parents, as well as dinners hosted by familites of participating children including the publication of a newsletter. In other words, similarity of socio-economic background, plus a lot of hard work, seems to augur for success.

The one overriding impression gained from looking at the three elements of the Los Angeles desegregation plan (magnets, PWT and mandatory), is that the white population shows little or no enthusiasm for participation in a desegregation program if it means sending their children into minority schools.

White Flight

That there is "white flight" there is little doubt. Anglo "non-participation" is easily documented. Approximately 31 percent of white children from grades 4-8 have "left" the district compared with 15 percent district wide. This has amounted to a loss of 30,000 youngsters,

the largest loss experienced ever by the district.

Farley believes that 10 or 15 thousand of the 30,000 could probably be chalked up to the desegregation plan, while the rest would have, in all likelihood, occurred anyway. In his report to the court, he noted that white enrollment declined by 29,400 in the Fall of 1978--from 194,000 to 165,000--and now makes up slightly less than 38% of the total district enrollment of 555,755. The white drop of 15.1% is the sharpest in the District's history.[9] Comparing the anglo loss in Los Angeles with 15 other cities, Farley concluded that losses appeared neither unusually high or low in comparison with other cities experiencing desegregation.[10]

Minorities, Chicanos, Blacks, and Asians make up the "New Majority" within the borders of the Los Angeles Unified School District. It would seem that effective school desegregation will have to involve neighboring and adjacent school districts in some kind of Metropolitan solution toward school desegregation. The political problems and prospects of such a remedy in the future will be discussed in a later section.

It is worthwhile to note that the issue of white flight or lack of whites in the district has become the pivot from which the board and its attorneys are fighting their case in court. Giving evidence to this approach the board's attorneys have called their experts, David J. Armor, a Rand Corporation social scientist and J. Michael Ross, a Boston University sociologist to present their findings that

whites are leaving the Los Angeles Unified School District because of the mandatory program, and that birth decline constitutes a minor factor explaining this loss.[11]

The petitioners and the Integration Project, one of the intervenors in the case, will as expected place before the court their demographic experts as well.

The steadily declining anglo enrollment in Los Angeles public schools seems at this point a fundamental demographic fact. Ultimately, this factor will have to be faced head on.

Is it possible for Los Angeles Schools (or any schools) to be considered desegregated without appreciable participation by whites?

Issues like forced busing and white flight take on a life of their own regardless of what kinds of facts exist. This, of course, constitutes the symbolic expression of issues in politics. Few can deny the portentous nature of these two concepts. They have come to represent in many people's minds a reality greater than some of policy decisions that will affect what kinds of students will attend what schools. It is part of what we call the politics of school desegregation, which of course is what this monograph seeks to address.

The achievement of a more equitable distribution of educational resources has been and continues to be the thrust of what constitutes the reason for school desegregation. In one instance the issue of school desegregation focuses on the needs of providing a pluralistic American

population with the opportunities of being educated in an environment that makes no arbitrary assumptions about the inherent worth of any person simply because of his or her racial or ethnic background. Recent evidence would suggest that we as a nation still have a long way to go in this regard.

There is also another imperative which underlines the importance of school desegregation. That imperative relates to the class differences which comprise still the most important differences between and among many of our racial and ethnic groups. School desegregation involves the purposeful and planned movement of students of varying racial backgrounds. It also involves at its very heart the integration of school children of various social and class backgrounds. In fact this dimension of school desegregation may ultimately prove to be the most important and most difficult aspect of the problem to be solved.

Recall how the struggles over the last three decades have brought to the surface the contradictions in American society between the values and commitment to universal education on the one hand and the realities of a class society on the other. A belief in education equality was uneasily grafted onto social inequality. The late 1950's and the 1960's witnessed the crumbling of the most glaring symbol of a racially segregated system -- the existence of a "separate but equal" school system. Civil rights forces coaligned with bureaucracy and the attorney general's office to crumble this vestige and symbol of

a racially segregated society.

That this struggle continues is testimony to the intransigence of those who benefit from unequal opportunity in education as elsewhere. It is also testimony of the fundamental and wholesale changes that will have to be made if the principles of equity in education are to be realized. What we view as education cannot exist alongside of the demands for equality.

FOOTNOTES

THE LOS ANGELES DESEGREGATION PLAN

1. For a history of school desegregation in California schools see Charles M. Wallenberg, All Deliberate Speed (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978). Also see John and Laree Caughey, School Segregation on our Doorstep: The Los Angeles Story (Quail Books, Los Angeles, 1966); and John Caughey, To Kill A Child's Spirit (F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., Itasca, Illinois, 1973).

2. Los Angeles Times, Part I, p. 1, October 11, 1979.

3. Los Angeles Times, Part I, p. 3, November 8, 1979.

4. Los Angeles Times, Part I, p. 1, March 25, 1979.

5. Ibid.

6. For a report on the court-appointed Committee monitoring the Los Angeles School District's voluntary program, see Los Angeles Times, Part I, p. 1, June 28, 1979.

7. William Trombley, Lecture, " The Los Angeles Desegregation Plan", May 16, 1979, as part of a series on the Politics of School Desegregation in Los Angeles. Course taught by Nand Hart-Nibbrig, Ph.D. University of Southern California, spring 1979.

8. Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 1, October 3, 1977.

9. William Trombley, Los Angeles Times.

10. William Trombley, Los Angeles Times.

11. Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 1, November 6, 1979; Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 1, December 24, 1979.

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Los Angeles has been legally ordered to desegregate its public schools with all means that are "reasonable and feasible". The history of the Los Angeles school district has been and remains today a history of resistance bordering on recalcitrance of Judge Alfred Gitelson's original decision in 1969, Crawford vs. Los Angeles Board of Education: On February 11, 1970, Judge Gitelson, after weeks of testimony, exercised the full prerogatives of a Superior Court Judge and ordered the Los Angeles public schools desegregated without regard to the causes of segregation. Or, in the words of John Caughey, "He found that the policies and the actions by the board and other agencies of government had so infiltrated the creating and maintaining of these segregated schools that the quality of de jure segregation was inextricably involved".[1] This aspect of the decision, the aspect which focused on fixing or finding liability is the key factor which makes California law so strong in comparison with federal law.

Before discussing the Crawford decision in some detail, there are important aspects of this case which should be stated and underlined. First and primary is the fact that this case is political by nature. Crawford at its very heart deals with racism in Los Angeles schools, as well as the social and political underpinnings which maintain a racist school policy.

In the language and spirit of its decision Crawford is the lineal descendant of Brown vs. Board of Education, the landmark case which purportedly ended government-sanctioned school segregation in the United States.[2] Brown focused its concern not just on children in classrooms but on the harm done to all minority children under a system of separate but equal education -- all too often education was more separate than equal. The decision rendered by Alfred Gitelson likewise was not only sensitive to children, minority children, but it also addressed itself to what was happening within the schools and found the Los Angeles School District "guilty" of maintaining a segregated school system that worked hardships on minority, especially poor minority, school children.[3] For this courageous decision Alfred Gitelson was summarily removed from office within a few months when he, as a result of California law, had to place his name before voters for re-election to the bench.

The brilliance of the Crawford decision lay clearly in that it looked squarely at the harmful effects of segregation in Los Angeles schools. It like Brown, moved its concern inside the school and asked, what is the impact on the minority segregated schools in Los Angeles. The matter was unfortunately not settled here. Immediately the School Board appealed Judge Gitelson's decision.

When the California Supreme Court finally decided the Crawford Case in 1976, it held that the findings in Los Angeles were sustained except

for the definition of desegregation. The Court, mindful that it had to make a state ruling, found the circumstances in Los Angeles instructive, though not a model, and proceeded to write its opinion on what it considered the general obligation of school boards in California.

The Court's decision focused primarily on the issue of liability, i.e., once a school district was determined to have engaged in creating and/or maintaining a segregated school system, it had to desegregate in what was described as with all means reasonable and feasible. This means that the question of what constitutes what is reasonable and feasible must be determined by lower courts (superior courts) where specific suits should be brought against offending school districts.

In some respects, the Supreme Court unstrait-jacketed the Gitelson decision, which incorporated a rigid formula for what constituted a desegregated school. Gitelson, basing his thinking on demographic characteristics of the district in 1970, stipulated that every school should be constituted on a 53-47 percent white-minority ratio.[4] The Court in 1976 said in effect, that was too much of a strait-jacket and, in effect, left the question of "remedy" open. This point should not be underestimated in understanding the meanderings of judicial procedure which continue today.

Crawford, having been compared to Brown in spirit and tone, is

again strikingly comparable to Brown on the question of remedy--what happens after liability has been determined. Like Brown, the matter of compliance and enforcement was to be determined elsewhere. Where the Warren Court in 1954 used words of "all deliberate speed", the California Supreme Court substituted the language of "reasonable and feasible." The court system tends, even in what appears to be a "revolutionary" decision, to stop short of applying the fullest sense of its authority. While Brown is justifiably hailed as a landmark decision in the area of school desegregation, it was not, in actuality, a radical departure from what the Court has been used to doing in the past. That is, it gave ground and widened constitutional scope without forcing compliance. Crawford also falls within this limitation. As long as the Court is satisfied to speak in great moral tones as far as liability is concerned and remain silent on specifics, i.e., leave it up to the trial courts, there will be room for school districts to marshal sufficient legal and political resources to fight, delay, and mollify the attack against established school policy. And in Los Angeles, it is a matter of policy to maintain a segregated school district.

The Court as a Political Instrument for School Desegregation

It should be apparent at this point that the Court system(s) in the United States, and California specifically, while often appearing to be strong governing bodies, have, in fact, substantial weaknesses as policymaking bodies. They are, in fact, quite limited in their

capacity to effectuate their decisions because they immediately rely on the so-called "political" branches for support and initiative for the effective compliance with their decisions.

What is equally important to determine is whether or not the legal system is inherently biased against minorities and the poor. Does the Court system tend to represent the interests of the politically dominant segments of society? In this regard, is it inherently conservative? The answer to these questions is a resounding yes! The Court system, by its very canons of procedure, works a special hardship on those with little means. This means too often that the organizations which attempt to represent the interests of minorities, especially poor minorities, will bring fewer resources to bear on court proceedings. One can assume that as court proceedings drag on, as in the case of Crawford, already meager resources are mercilessly stretched, making a fiction out of the notion that there are equal rights for all in courts of law.

The Courts then are not immune from the economic and social disparities which inhere in society in general. Rather than immunity from such disparities, Court procedures, often long, drawn-out procedures, give inordinate advantages to the resource rich.

It would appear that with few exceptions, the best hope for minorities in court is a "friendly" or receptive judge. The Warren Court that decided Brown in 1954 was such a court. Likewise, in 1969 it

took a jurist like Judge Gitelson to step into the lurch and draw the issues to a resounding conclusion after hearing an arrogant defense of school board policies.

Such a jurist is not Paul Egly. In fact, Judge Egly, who nobody denies is one of the most knowledgeable people on the issues of the case, seems incapable of exercising more authority in the case and bringing it to an effective closure.

Judge Egly's role in the Crawford Case has been a disheartening one. It is fairly clear at this point that he will not take command of this case, at least not to the point of facing up to the consistent recalcitrance of the School Board as it maneuvers to avoid desegregating its schools.

To some extent, Egly's role is limited by the impediments of the position itself. Trial court judges in California essentially grant and deny motions in hearings before them. They do not have the luxury available to appellate court judges. That is, they can not make new law. If they do, they can expect their ruling to be appealed immediately.

Judge Egly, like most superior court judges, does not have the time or research capability to make his own independent inquiries into the law. He at once presides over and is dependent on the parties at dispute before him. The quality of the parties arguing before the bench is absolutely critical to the outcome. Judges function-

ing under these circumstances often become victims of the ambitions, drives and motives of the parties. Certainly they will be limited by them.

As for personal style, Paul Egly shows a great reluctance to interpret the Supreme Court's decision as a green light giving him the opportunity to grab the bull by the horns and force the School Board to comply with Crawford. Where Gitelson was assertive, Egly is hesitant. He denies and demeans his own ability to interpret the court. Egly's style seems more the style of a "negotiator", a role that does not demand taking charge, which means, of course, that he is not a good negotiator. Good negotiating means, among other things, that the parties are moved by direct action or are worn down to a point where concessions can be extracted. Egly seems to adopt the style of the negotiator without the assertiveness and direction of moving a process to conclusion.

Additionally, there is a fatal flaw in the negotiator posture of Paul Egly. It assumes that he can resolve the powerful political forces that are at play in this case. If it is indeed his intention, it is unrealistic of Judge Egly to assume that he can impose a negotiator settlement on the powerful political forces at play in this case. What are assembled here are forces with national organizations and constituencies employing experts to testify in their behalf. This is a test case, a case testing not just the meaning of law, but the strength

of the litigant's impact on the law. Negotiation will not suffice.

The matter of whether a school system desegregates is first and foremost a matter of public policy. This fact has unfortunately been subsumed under the emotion-charged rhetoric that surrounds this issue, especially when desegregation is synonymous with mandatory busing. As a matter of public policy it is imperative that we discuss and analyze the political system through which this policy process occurs. Related to an assessment of the political process will be an analysis of the political impact of various groups (blacks, Jews, Chicanos, anti-busers) on the political process.

Jews, liberal Democrats, long allies with blacks in civil rights matters now find cleavage and conflict over the issue of school desegregation and in the process expose themselves to internal conflicts and political weakness. It would seem that only antibusing forces are effectively winning the political battles at least in the short run.

The Federal Role

While the role of the federal government via the federal court system has been pronouncedly important in many if not most desegregation cases, the role of the feds in the Los Angeles case has been indirect.[5] Crawford is not a federal case. It is a state case, although it is a lineal descendent of Brown as most desegregation cases since May 1954 are.

Federal Administrative and executive involvement likewise has been indirect also, aside from HEW's threat to withhold federal funds from

the L.A.U.S.D. because of lukewarm attempts to desegregate teaching staffs. The good intentions expressed by President Carter in January 1977 to eliminate discrimination in America's schools, along with former HEW Secretary Joseph Califano's warning to non-compliant school districts that their federal funds would be cut off if they did not adhere to federal guidelines on school desegregation, while expressing the Carter Administration's position, were not enough to ensure effective compliance.[6] Additionally the problems associated with implementing school desegregation guidelines have been exacerbated because the Congress has in recent years "aided and abetted obstructionists in the field of desegregation by attempting to make it difficult to enforce desegregation policies.[7]

The U.S. Supreme Court, nevertheless, still appears committed to desegregation of the nation's schools and remains the most responsive of the three branches of government in this area of policy. While it provides still the beacon of hope for those seeking their constitutional rights, it is in some respects an indicator that those rights to equal protection of the laws are a long way from acquisition. Without the combined enforcement and resource generating capacity of the executive and Congressional branches the desegregation ball-game is played in the "weakest" ball-park.

The State Role

While the California Supreme Court was clear as to what constituted public policy in this matter, the other branches of government, respon-

sive to other political constituencies, have been successfully used to negate the direction established by the court. This, of course, should not come as a surprise. Californians with few exceptions are not disposed to desegregation, and are certainly not disposed to run against a public tide that could sweep them out of legislative office. There are exceptions and one is the newly elected state senator from Los Angeles and former member of the Los Angeles School Board, Diane Watson. Senator Watson's role in the Los Angeles desegregation case will be presented later when Los Angeles School Board politics are discussed. Suffice it to say at this point that she stands virtually alone as a consistent and strong voice for effective school desegregation while serving in the state legislature.

No discussion of the California legislature can proceed without some attention to the efforts of State Senator Alan Robbins and his attempts to use/misuse state legislative authority to circumvent the Supreme Court's ruling on school desegregation in Los Angeles. Senator Robbins (D) from Van Nuys, California successfully engineered the passage of a constitutional amendment designed to shift standards under which remedies to school desegregation, like mandatory busing programs, are prescribed from California precedent to federal precedent. The legislature with support from such liberals as Leo McCarthy, Assembly Speaker, and Democratic Majority Leader Howard L. Berman, like Robbins from the San Fernanco Valley, passed the anti-busing busing amendment early with only token opposition. It would

appear that in an election year there would be few who would oppose this measure. The Robbins Amendment or as it appeared on the City ballot, Proposition 1, ran up a 74% yes vote in Los Angeles County where it even excelled Robbins' own estimate of passage.[8]

There was little doubt about the passage of the measure, the only question was the margin of passage. In 1972 a similar measure, the so-called Wakefield Amendment, a measure which attempted to stop mandatory busing by requiring parents' consent, was approved by 63% of the California voters. That measure was later over-turned by the Supreme Court in 1975.[9] A similar fate may await the Robbins Amendment described editorially by the Los Angeles times as a "gimmick" purporting to do what it could not do, stop mandatory busing in California schools, and would instead put the state on the side of racial discrimination.[10] The matter as it now stands seems to have no direct impact on the use of busing to achieve school desegregation. Legal questions raised earlier in the campaign to pass Proposition 1 still remain unsettled. Is the measure constitutional and if not, what effect will it have in Los Angeles? At this point there is no indication that much will change. The California State Board of Education indicated shortly after Proposition 1's passage that it will continue pressing school districts in California to reduce school desegregation.[11]

There was even some indication among those fighting the mandatory program that the measure may not be enforced. G. William Shea, one of the top legal advisors for the Los Angeles School Board in

Crawford, in a confidential letter, told the School Board that system-wide busing could be required in Los Angeles if the Constitutional Amendment was approved.[12] He based his opinion on an analysis of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the Columbus and Dayton, Ohio cases.[12]

Likewise, Roberta Weintraub, the anti-busing President of the School Board admitted that the passage of Proposition 1 had definite legal risks. Nevertheless, despite those risks it had "merit" as a way for people to express their anti-busing sentiments at the polls.[13] In her way, Mrs. Weintraub has indicated the real importance of Proposition 1. The measure as it stands will likely not have direct legal effect on busing in California Schools. It will, however, contribute to a growing anti-busing political climate which will make it unlikely that much political leadership will emerge urging a different course of action. The ease with which the measure steam-rolled through the legislature is indicative of the depth of the anti-busing political feeling. There will, of course be some who will undoubtedly use the anti-busing momentum to move their political careers into higher orbit. Bobbi Feidler has already indicated that she will run for Congress. Senator Robbins had previous to Proposition 1's overwhelming passage indicated that he was considering running for Los Angeles County Supervisor next year. His political stock among L.A. County voters probably has gone up.[14] Los Angeles County approved Proposition 1 by a whopping 74%.

Non-legislative officials have contributed to the costly and enervating delays preventing the desegregation of Los Angeles schools - not the least of whom have been Governor Edmund Brown, Jr., and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Wilson Riles, the highest-ranking black administrator in California's executive establishment.

The Governor's Role

In California at least during the period of litigation in Crawford, the governor's office has done little or nothing to implement the Court's decision. Former Republican Governor Ronald Reagan was, of course, pronouncedly opposed to school desegregation, certainly mandatory busing programs.[15] Governor Reagan clearly opposed such programs prior to, during, and after, his two terms as California's chief executive. It should be borne in mind that the Reagan years occurred during a time when minorities in California and Los Angeles were preoccupied with the issues of self and group identity and its resultant interest in "community control". While Governor Reagan was not predisposed to push desegregation, neither was he pushed by minority leadership during the time. Consequently not much was done.

Where former Governor Reagan was clearly opposed to mandatory busing as a way to achieve school desegregation, Governor Jerry Brown, now an avowed candidate for the 1980 presidential campaign is on first appearance, a kaleidoscope of reaction on the question of school desegregation.

The effect of all this is that virtually no political support has come from the Brown administration promoting school desegregation.[16] Instead of political direction and the full use of the governor's authority in this vital policy area, Brown states on the one hand that he realizes that we have got to desegregate and on the other hand that we should not be prisoners of past perceptions.[17] He has further gone on to suggest that new ideas ought to be tried: among them, two-way T.V., interaction to link schools, workshops, joint projects, magnet schools - something upbeat to bring people together. On one occasion preceding the 1978 spring elections in California former Deputy District Attorney Trapp was seeking to push his anti-busing appeal through the state hierarchy. He sought aid from Governor Brown and State Attorney General Evelle Younger, Brown's most formidable gubernatorial opposition. Trapp charged that white children moved from the West San Ferrando Valley to Hollenbeck, a centrally located minority school, would be "robbed, raped, assaulted, subjected to narcotics or victimized by gangs."[18] Brown's response, reiterated through a press aide, was typically evasive. The matter was a local issue, according to the aide, and not something the governor was legally empowered to inject himself into. Further, he indicated that he had reservations about fulltime, fullscale busing, and that the issue should be worked out at the local level.[19]

It would appear that the governor was seriously misinformed about the contents of the Los Angeles plan. The Los Angeles deseg-

regation plan did not require fullscale, fulltime busing. One has to assume that politics motivated the governor's response, not an understanding of what was involved in the plan.

The point being made here is that Governor Brown's position has the same effect as his immediate predecessor's. No political leadership has come from the governor's office in this most difficult and divisive political issue. While it is recognized that the governor does not have direct authority in the Los Angeles case, he can influence the course of debate and opinion on the question of school desegregation and its necessary concomitant, mandatory busing. Just as gubernatorial politics precludes a strong pro-desegregation position in California, so does national presidential politics. Politically it is perceived as a no-win issue.

Superintendent of Public Education

As noted previously, California has what is known as a plural executive. This means that the effective heads of state departments are elected not appointed like the President's cabinet. This is not the place for a discussion of the relative merits (or demerits) of California's executive establishment. What is important is the fact that top level decision makers in the California executive have a marked degree of independence from the governor due primarily because they run for election without gubernatorial support. California department heads are elected directly by the voters. They form their own electoral organizations and run electoral campaigns which have

little contact with one another. This, of course, includes the office of Superintendent for Public Instruction.

When the Crawford case made its initial appearance in Judge Gitelson's Superior Court, Max Rafferty, a Republican Conservative and former Superintendent of the La Canada School District, a school district separate from the Pasadena District, was Superintendent of Public Instruction. Rafferty's position on school desegregation can be quickly summed up by saying that he opposed busing of school children and used everything in his power to thwart attempts to move the Superintendent's office in that direction.

In 1971, Wilson Riles, a black career educator, surprised most political pundits in California by defeating the popular and outspoken Rafferty. With this victory Riles became the first black person to win statewide elective office in the history of California.[20] Since his election over eight years ago Superintendent Riles is credited with having developed what was considered generally a weak administrative office to one of considerable political clout. Throughout his first two terms of office he has compiled a success rate with the state legislature that would be the envy of any high elected officer in the state. It is largely because of this success with the legislature that Riles is both respected and feared as a political figure. He quite possibly could be the most "activist" Superintendent in the country.[21]

For those who advocate school desegregation policies in California Wilson Riles has been a considerable disappointment as State

Superintendent. Riles, like most minorities who have achieved an electoral first, has been careful over the years not to identify publicly too close with minority groups. His public focus has been consistently broad as evidenced when he said, "I really don't play the race game....I am concerned about black kids. But I am concerned about all kids."[22]

Consequently, his record on school desegregation has not been encouraging. Always the moderate on such issues (at least publicly) Riles is apparently opposed to mandatory desegregation if it creates community conflict(?!). On the other hand he supports voluntary busing, presumably less prone to provoke wide opposition. I might add further that so-called voluntary efforts as already shown, are likely to be the least effective, most costly, not to say most burdensome to minorities. To be for voluntary efforts to desegregate public schools is to consign educational problems of poor minorities to the back burner. While favoring voluntary efforts to desegregate, Riles is not often heard publicly supporting such measures. It would appear that the political realities of what influential white constitutents want are the ones to which the Superintendent is responsive.

The bottom line as realists like to say is that the most influential of State Superintendents has chosen <u>not</u> to use his recognized power base to do more than declare that he is personally for integration but does not like to engage in emotional no-win contests.

The mere presence of a black figure in office is not in itself sufficient to alter policy. It would appear that Liberals, minorities included, who seek extended tenures in office buy into structures that impede more than they allow for minority interests.

The Board of Education/Office of the Superintendent

No discussion of school desegregation in Los Angeles can proceed without some discussion of the role of the Los Angeles School Board and the Central Administration headed by the office of the Superintendent. This, of course, is the nerve center for decision-making. As the reader will appreciate it is fairly obvious that no one or two governing structures monopolize this policy-making process. What will be described and analyzed are the interdependencies of different governing and political instititions.

While it is not the purpose of this project to describe in detail the organization of the school board and the Administration, some description of the structures of each is necessary to place the more dynamic decision-making process in perspective.[23]

The gargantuan Los Angeles District is "governed" by the Los Angeles City Board of Education composed of seven members who, as of April 1979, are elected from electoral districts. This is a major change in the manner of selecting board members. Until April, 1979, all seven members elected to the school board were elected at large. Elections were held every other odd-numbered year with three

members being chosen at one election and four at the other.

The political consequences stemming from this electoral change have not been fully understood at this point, but a few observations can be made with respect to the issue of public school desegregation. First of all, the formal impetus for making the change came largely from within the Los Angeles City Council. By some peculiarity of law, the Los Angeles City Council has the authority to regulate and make necessary changes in the manner or selecting members of the school board. The proposition changing the electoral system from at-large to a district system was incidentally on the same ballot as the recall measure directed by Bustop against the incumbent Board President Howard Miller. This undoubtedly drew more attention to the measure than it would otherwise have gained.

Prior to the election most of the concern was on the measure's impact on school desegregation efforts. It is difficult to make an assessment at this time, but there seems to be little change in the composition of the Board that can be directly related to the replacement of the at-large system. Opinions about the effects were mixed prior to and immediately after the change. It seems that most black public officials assumed that the change to a district system was a necessary move for two reasons. First they believed that a district system would ensure a minority presence on the school board; that is, they assumed that if districts were gerrymandered properly, there would be a black and chicano seat. Secondly, and related somewhat to the first point,

black leaders believed that the anti-busing tide was growing to such proportions that not only would minorities be swept out of office but moderate board members as well. In this sense the electoral change was an attempt to dam the political efforts of anti-busing groups like Bustop from totally dominating decision-making on the Board.[24]

What then have been the results from all these changes? Not much has changed. The Board does have one minority member, Rita Walters, who was elected from the predominantly black 1st. District in Central and South Central Los Angeles. On the other hand, busing incumbent Richard Ferraro handily defeated Vance Mardirosian, a chicano candidate, in a district which includes parts of East Los Angeles and Eagle Rock. What was interesting about this election was the fact that even though chicanos comprise the majority in the district they still gave evidence of not being able to focus attention on one candidate and turn out for elections.

On the other hand, Board President Howard Miller was successfully recalled from office and replaced by the San Fernando Valley-based anti-buser Roberta Weintraub who now - surprisingly - has been selected as President of the Los Angeles Board of Education.

The alteration in the manner of selecting Board members has had little effect on Board action, principally because of the strength of the anti-busing movement.

fact a legislative agent. Perhaps the best way to see the Board is to see it as a body required to carry out policies within prescribed Codes and statutes. In so doing Board members collectively and individually rely heavily on the Central Administration for information, Clarification of proceedure, etc.[27]

The public impression and expectation is one of assuming an almost carte blanche capability as far as decision-making is concerned. The activities of the school board in the area of school desegregation could very well give that impression. On closer observation the impression gained from the Board's authority shows as much dependence on the Central Administration as it shows independence in the area of school desegregation. In fact, if my impressions are correct, the heart of the decision-making system, although involving both the board and administration, rests largely in the Superintendent's office.

The Board must almost totally rely on the Central Administration for information as it has virtually no personal staff of its own. As a result it becomes continually dependent on, if not captured by, the Administrative staff. This is not new to government when there exists a part-time body dependent on Administrative expertise.

Recently newly-elected board member from the Harbor District in Los Angeles John Greenwood exemplified the Board's problem during the Board's consideration of the school budget. Greenwood complained that he had no real information upon which he could make a budgetary decision. In fact he found the information provided by the Superintendent's

One is less sure of the future consequences of the effects of the measure. Blacks should not feel particularly secure that they will continue to have a seat on the board. If present population trends continue in South Central Los Angeles, what appears to be a safe black seat today could very well develop into a chicano seat tomorrow. It is within black neighborhoods that the greatest chicano changes seem to be taking place.

Secondly, if the present behavior of this newly elected school board is any indication of future trends, all the district system has done is to insure that anti-busers would be elected from the individual districts without much hope of unseating them. The advantages of the at-large system from the pro-busing point of view was that organization and money could be imported to build coalition support when it was needed. When initially anti-busing advocates were concerned about the attempts to blunt their political edge, they now rest somewhat secure in having elected Tom Bartman, a co-founder of Bustop, in the November 1979 election, thus filling the last seat and totally dominating the board's politics.[25]

The district system may have, in effect, moved the Los Angeles Unified School District into a system of "separate but unequal" in devising district policy. As former board member Diane Watson speculated on the future effects on the district, the district system may remove the only stimulus for board members to attempt anything re-

sembling district responsibility for policy-making. Being elected from an at-large system not only gave her the opportunity but encouraged her to run for election within the entire district and to be a more representative board member for the district as a whole.[26]

As far as the political character of the Board is concerned, several things can be posited. First and forever the Los Angeles Board of Education has emerged as one of the most important public-policy-making bodies in Los Angeles. This is certainly true where education policy is made. What has changed with respect to the board has not been the fact the body is an important decision-making body, but its visibility as an important body. What could have taken place behind closed doors ten or fifteen years ago will in all likelihood be drawn into a public forum without too much effort. This certainly has been the case where school-desegregation policy is concerned. In fact, one could very usefully look at the Board's history in handling the desegregation question and derive considerable insight as to the effect of this consuming and expansive issue on decision-making and personnel selection on the board itself.

Secondly, not only has the board become a more visible public body, it has become the vehicle through which many educational issues have become politicized. This of course raises the question of whether or not such issues are educational or political by nature.

Politically speaking the Los Angeles School Board is not in

office indecipherable.

The response from the Superintendent's office was quick and immediate. They would inform him of what he did not seem to understand. The pattern had been established.

To understand the relationship between the Board and the Superintendent's office requires first an understanding that the essence of that relationship is informal. The decision process involves a continuous pattern of contact from the administration, helping, assisting and maintaining rapport with members of the board. This means that major decisions are made prior to getting to the board table. Who is going to vote on what issue, when and how is likely to be decided within a closed decision-making system.[28] The linch-pin in this web of decision-making between these two most important bodies is the Superintendent himself, flanked by his close aides and confidants, the Deputy and Associate Superintendents. Not only do these high-ranking bureaucrats sit at the top of Administrative officialdom in the Los Angeles School District, they sit at the apex of where real decision-making takes place, affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of students: It is with the Superintendent and his high-ranking staff that intergovernmental negotiations take place. Not much of consequence occurs beyond this point.

In summary, then, the heart of decision-making within the school district involves the web of relationships between the Board of Edu-

cation and the Superintendent's office. It not only comprises the nerve center for policy-making, but it is virtually impervious to political forces which run counter to it. As the school district becomes increasingly a minority school district with a different set of educational priorities, this ability of white political power to dominate education policy in Los Angeles becomes increasingly significant. There is no mistake here. What we are witnessing is white dominance where the educational futures of a minority school district are concerned.

City Politics and School Desegregation

The city of Los Angeles, while it does not constitute all of the Los Angeles Unified School District, constitutes most of it. This means that the city government of Los Angeles as well as the politics surrounding the city government affects public policy within the school district. The city government, i.e., the mayor's office and city council, are in most cases formally separated from the Los Angeles School Board and its administration. In an exception to this rule, by a peculiarity of the city charter the city council has the responsibility for managing the allocation of seats on the school board. Up to now this has not been an important council function. But the events of last year have raised some interesting questions about the Council's role in subsequent school board elections now that the board has changed from an at-large to a district system of electing board members.

The interface between the school board and city government is likely to be indirect and political. This means, as it usually does, that the realities of decision-making incorporate political elements beyond the formal decisions which separate offices and branches of government. It is within this context that the Los Angeles City Council and the Mayor's office are discussed.

The City Council

A point made earlier and reiterated here is that the entire fabric of governance within California for the most part is manned by people who for various reasons are effectively opposing school desegregation. The Los Angeles City Council is no exception. The fifteen member city council has only 3 black members, and no Asians or Chicanos. Of the three blacks on the Council only one Councilman, David Cunningham, who represents Mayor Tom Bradley's old 10th councilmatic seat, has voiced his commitment for the need for school desegregation in Los Angeles. His district is composed of a majority black and Asian population with a diminishing number of whites who make up the Western periphery.

Other blacks on the Council, Gilbert Lindsey, the most senior black, and Robert Farrell, have kept a rather low profile on school desegregation. Councilman Lindsey's district is located on the Eastside of Los Angeles and is ethnically mixed, i.e., it is virtually half chicano and black. Partly because of this demographic feature there has been little consistent pressure on Councilman Lindsey to

assume much leadership. Lindsey is considered a politican of the old school, having served his apprenticeship under the powerful county supervisor Kenneth Hahn. Lindsey takes care of his district and little else. He has all of the limitations associated with a ward politician whose interests and capabilities extend little beyond his electoral district. Robert Farrel's district which is located in Southwest Los Angeles is probably the poorest district in Los Angeles and is over 90% black. Although the issue of desegregation definitely affects people in his district, most seem to feel that it is not as immediately important as policies which relate more directly to job, health and general welfare issues. It is precisely among these black constituencies that the commitment toward school desegregation is weakest.[29] Too many here realize that the minimum gains from desegregation efforts will fall short before reaching them. The political results are predictable. There exists little or no pressure emanating from this district on behalf of school desegregation.

The majority of the city council is white and represents for the most part white constituents. The Council's position has been clearly stated when the city council went on record and passed a resolution condemning the use of mandatory busing for school desegregation. While the resolution had no legal effect on what was done by the school board, it added further cement to the wall of resistance by the political community in Los Angeles.

One can expect the issue of school desegregation to affect future councilmatic elections as it did in the Spring of 1979. Newly elected councilman Robert Ronka from the San Fernando Valley clearly was the first major beneficiary of the so-called busing issue in Los Angeles. And, depending on what happens in Judge Egly's court, the issue could affect not only subsequent councilmatic elections but the upcoming mayoralty election in 1981. Bustop, the most prominent antibusing organization, will see to that. It is one of the important reasons also why Mayor Tom Bradley has chosen to duck the busing issue.

The issue of busing, mandatory busing then, is the element that continues to infect the political process. Certainly future councilmatic races will feel the heat of those who have organized to halt the process of school desegregation. No serious observer in Los Angeles can fail to see the importance of this.

The Council's role, then, on first observation, is indirect. Closer scrutiny, however, reveals that the Council has a profound political impact on any matter which affects citizens of Los Angeles, particularly white and affluent citizens. This issue of desegregation is such an issue.

City Hall - The Mayor's Office

Like most executives, including most big-city mayors, the Los

Angeles Mayor is assumed to have more authority and power than he in reality has. Most who follow city politics cannot but be aware that the mayor of Los Angeles does not monopolize all that is necessary to dominate the political arena. The political reality of executive power in Los Angeles is that this office holder must share his power with other powerful elements within the community, e.g., business leaders of the largest corporations, banks and financial institutions; other government leaders, the Board of Supervisors, powerful members of the city council - U.S. Congressmen, and Senators, state legislators - the governor, etc., - the dominant press, especially the Los Angeles Times, as well as powerful community interests within and without the black community, the powerful coalition of Democratic liberals, westside Jews and minorities who constitute the coalition which has dominated Los Angeles electoral politics for the last 10 years. All have important impact on policy making in the mayor's office. It is partly within this context that the mayor's positions on school desegregation will be assessed.

The Mayor and School Desegregation

Perhaps the most charitable thing that can be said about Mayor Tom Bradley's role and position vis-a-vis the issue of school desegregation, especially mandatory busing, is to suggest that he has not inflamed the political process with rhetoric that would make an already difficult situation virtually impossible.[30] Mayor Bradley

has chosen to take the "high road", honoring and respecting decisions reached in Judge Egly's court. Another interpretation of this position is that Mayor Bradley has choesn for political reasons to duck the issue of school desegregation. What is to follow is one interpretation and analysis of Mayor Bradley's position and some judgments about the consequences, especially for poor minority school children in racially segregated Los Angeles schools.

School desegregation, as most political observers recognize it, is one of those "social issues" which few people running for office or trying to keep office will willingly embrace. If anything is clear about the political potential of this issue it is that one rides it at one's peril or one advocates a position against busing, a position with much support across the United States as well as in Los Angeles. Mayor Bradley certainly recognizes this and has chosen to do what Governor Brown did with proposition 13, i.e., to ride the public tide and hope to maintain his constituency support.[31]

Public antagonism toward school desegregation explains a good part of Tom Bradley's reluctance to develop a pro-desegregation posture. There are other elements that contribute to an understanding of Bradley's position. One is Mayor Bradley's personal background and political style. Tom Bradley is the first black mayor ever in the history of Los Angeles, the first elected black mayor in a city where blacks constitute roughly 18% of the total population. This

suggests that he could not depend on achieving black and other minority support alone and hope to win the top electoral seat in the sprawling metropolitan city.

The political realities of Los Angeles, i.e., the fact that whites still make up the majority of voters; that most of the money which fuels electoral machines comes from white organizations and individuals; that most of the ownership of business and the financial institutions are white, all demonstrate the political and economic parameters of Mayor Bradley's tenure in office.

Mayor Bradley, like all who are elected to office, must pay close attention to what political scientists term the dominant interests which elect and maintain him in office. There is every indication that while he is extremely popular throughout Los Angeles, Tom Bradley is best seen as a somewhat moderate, black politican who, while he needs minority electoral support, depends on the money, organization and skill which comes by and large from white, so-called liberal, Jewish districts from West Los Angeles. It is within this coalition of groups and interests that the electoral and political influence of the Mayor rests.

This politically dominant coalition, like all coalitions, is not an aggregation of equal parts. Some elements are stronger than others, i.e., have more resources which are more readily translated into the political process, and therefore exert more influence and power within the coalition itself. This is the case in Los Angeles

and within the so-called liberal, Westside, minority coalition. The Westside dominates this coalition. This means that there will be little financial or organizational support for anyone who chooses to publicly advocate public policies which run against the interests of the politically powerful Westsiders.

The effective desegregation of Los Angeles public schools is such an issue. As discussed previously, the Los Angeles desegregation plan reflects the influence and power of the Westside by providing the necessary escape from its provisions of mandatory busing while meeting the school district's desegregation guidelines.

What is important to focus on here, of course, are the political limits placed upon Tom Bradley, given this reality. It is fairly clear that Mayor Bradley has publicly couched his position(s) on school integration and mandatory busing in such a way that he does not offend and therefore cut Westside financial and organizational support.

Mayor Bradley, as mentioned earlier, has elected to speak about school desegregation from the lofty position of the need to obey the law. No one can fault such a position on its face. The problem with Tom Bradley's politics is that he seems to adjust his political rhetoric to suit his audience. For example, during his re-election campaign in 1977, Mayor Bradley seemingly struck a blow for school desegregation. When challenged by the then-mayoral candidate Alan Robbins, who now is the leading anti-busing force in the state legisla-

ture, he backed down. Thus was formed a pattern which became typical during much of the campaign when the issue was raised.[32]

As another example, Mayor-Candidate Bradley, while campaigning for office, asserted his opposition to "massive cross-town busing".[33] This was done on several occasions, including in a Brentwood Synagogue. Again the connection is clear. Mayor Bradley did what he felt he had to do when facing the most important group of constituents. He did what most who run for office do, he told them what they wanted to hear, which was that Tom Bradley would not threaten their neighborhood sanctuaries with a mandatory busing program. He has paid close attention to where his political bread is buttered![34]

There is an important fact that must be underlined before proceeding further. Mayor Bradley's disavowal of any connection with mandatory busing, while viewed in many circles as necessary and expedient, was in fact a deliberate fabrication of something that did not exist and was not likely to exist in the near future. There is no massive cross-town busing program, there never was and the likelihood of one being developed, given the political realities in Los Angeles, is doubtful. What Mayor Bradley did immediately was to secure his re-election and secondarily give aid and comfort to those who opposed any real change in who has access to good public education.

By choosing the expedient road to re-election, Mayor Bradley

secured the ascendance of the coalition which elected him to office while closing the political door to any real expectation that the highest political office will be used in the service of desegregating Los Angeles city schools.

In some respects the limits put on the exercise of policy options by Tom Bradley are those faced by any mayor of this city. A fragmented political presence of minorities provides the context for what is politically impossible. This, of course, is another way of focusing on the inherent problems of coalitions and the continued cases accrued by the coalition's weakest links, poor minorities.

Personally Tom Bradley seems admirably suited for the kind of Mayor tolerated by those who now are in political ascendency in Los Angeles. Tom Bradley is extremely hardworking and a personable man who it would seem had spent much of his professional life, first as a policeman who rose to the position of lieutenant, Councilman, and now Mayor, not offending many people. No matter what has been said critically of the man, all who know or work with him have spoken of his personal qualities with considerable admiration. What better candidate to be the first minority mayor of Los Angeles?

In some ways Tom Bradley demonstrates the limits that a minority office-holder cannot go beyond without incurring the costs of re-election. No minority candidate for the Mayor's office or any office which depends on white support can be a strong advocate for those kinds of issues (to include public school desegregation) which

focus public resources on the welfare of minorities. Perhaps Mayor Bradley knows this better than anyone. He does, after all, sit at the center of all of this.

While no particular pattern of behavior from a mayor is translatable from situation to situation, one thing seems clear. School desegregation can not proceed without the use of the Mayor's office. School experiences in Seattle, Washington, have underlined the significance of this proposition. The issue involves the use of the prerogatives of office to aid and support those who are trying to promote greater equity in public education. Seattle's last two mayors have shown that there are different ways of accomplishing this goal, one working behind the scenes, the other organizing more publicly, but both working for school desegregation.

Mayor Bradley has done pitifully little publicly and has unfortunately done less out of public view to promote school desegregation. One expects a mayor in Tom Bradley's position to present two faces: one for public view; the other for those who in fact make policy. There is no discrepancy in assessing Bradley's political commitment here. In fact, there is some evidence suggesting that Mayor Bradley, in the confines of his office and in behind-the-scenes negotiations, has used his influence to moderate and to mollify the positions of those who have fought most persistently for a meaningful desegregation program.

The fates of former Los Angeles School Board member Diane Watson, now California State Senator, and the NAACP attorneys in the Crawford case will illustrate the point.

As stated previously, Diane Watson found herself as the only advocate for a strong, effective desegregation program. After Los Angeles school board member Robert Doctor was removed from office by a successful campaign by anti-busing advocate Bobbie Feidler in the San Fernando Valley, Ms. Watson found herself not only alone on the issue of mandatory busing, but increasingly the target not only from expected pressures of anti-busers but also from her friends and allies. This was particularly the case as the Los Angeles School Board moved toward voting for the present plan. Up until the very last moments prior to the final vote, Ms. Watson endured without much relief the continued pressures from Board President Howard Miller, who as mentioned previously had sufficient votes to carry the day but who needed the only black member of the board's support to cement the package. Miller was successful in undermining what little semblance of support was generated from the black community by convincing an all-too-willing black leadership that getting something was better than getting nothing at all and that Ms. Watson's hold-out for something stronger was not politically possible. Diane Watson soon recognized that the constituency she had based her support upon was in the Board President's hip pocket.

The coup de grace ensuring Diane Watson's support for the desegregation plan was supplied by the Mayor himself. During the hectic last few hours before the vote showdown, Howard Miller elicited support from the Mayor's office in order to bring the recalcitrant board member under tow. Privately a call was put into the Mayor's office by Mayoral Aide Bill Jenkins. It was at this critical moment that Tom Bradley let Diane Watson know that he wanted her support for this plan. It was in retrospect the final blow, ending what can be described only as heroic resistance.[35]

The facts, the political facts, were compelling. Without public and private support from within and attack from without, Ms. Watson had to succumb which, of course, she did. Howard Miller got a plan that would politically float. Mayor Bradley saw to that.

Mayor Bradley's role was not limited to this one-shot affair. During much of the period preceding the showdown vote, the Mayor refused the many entreaties by Boardmember Watson to take leadership and give the necessary direction for school desegregation. Displaying that dogged determination that undoubtedly helped him reach high political office, Mayor Bradley steadfastly refused her any support. She was set adrift alone as the only public figure directly involved and committed to school desegregation.

The behind-the-scenes negotiations have continued to this day. What has changed, of course, is that Diane Watson no longer sits on the school board and is now a member of the state senate.

Mayor Bradley's role remains the same, publicly committed to the maintenance of peace while privately helping to negotiate a moderate settlement. That process continues with the court referee, Monroe Price, as the Kissingerlike figure moving among the office of Mayor, the school superintendent and Judge Egly's court chambers.

The N.A.A.C.P. attorneys (represented in the case by the law firm of Schockley, Duff, and Hart-Nibbrig, and Manning, Reynolds, Roberts and sole practitioner Halvor Miller) have likewise felt the effects of being placed on the defensive by those with whom they are publicly linked. Throughout their involvement in this case, the N.A.A.C.P. attorneys have argued and fought for the strongest position in support of school desegregation. The efforts of Board President Miller, the Mayor's office and a "moderate" black leadership for a time successfully created the impression that the N.A.A.C.P. lawyers were being unreasonable and were part of the problem of failure to reach a reasonable solution. Much too much time and energy had to go into this internecine warfare. The effect politically was to create an unfavorable impression which allowed the lawyers' position to be outflanked.

The lesson to be drawn from this is clear. No amount of pressure for fundamental change in school desegregation is likely to succeed in the near future. What is palpably clear is that those who do not want change can count on a mayor whose political loyalties lie with

the pragmatic middle rather than with those who are leaning against a brick wall of resistance. Compromise is expected. What is so surprising from Los Angeles Black leadership is the price tag for compromise. It seems so cheap, given what is at stake.

Does Tom Bradley's political role as a black mayor define the inherent limitations of any mayor regardless of racial or ethnic background?

First of all, there is no disregarding a person's race or ethnic background, given political realities today. White race has not proven a limitation to achieve the mayor's office. It has, when accompanied with a financially and politically weak constituency, proved to limit what a minority mayor can do, particularly if he is interested in seeking re-election. Once an incumbent decides on his re-election, he buys into a system which offers little in the way of opportunity for its poorest citizens. He certainly forecloses most opportunities to do much about their problems.

We arrive where we started. Those who represent us are responsive primarily to those who vote and support and maintain them in office. The demands for leadership beyond this circle of advantage are more evident today, but they are not likely to be fulfilled.

FOOTNOTES

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS

1. John Caughey, To Kill a Child's Spirit , (F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., Itasca, Illinois, 1973) p. 137.

2. Joseph H. Duff, Relevant Definitions in the Crawford Case, draft memorandum 11-4-77; Mary Ellen Crawford V. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles, Superior Court of the State of California, for the County of Los Angeles, Petitioners' memorandum of points and authorities Re: Definitions of Segregated Schools, (Case No. C822 854).

3. John Caughey, op cit.

4. Mary Ellen Crawford, as Minor, etc., et al, Plaintiffs and respondents, V. Board of Education, Defendant and appellant, A. 30485, Supreme Court of California, June 28, 1978 (California Reporter, 17 Col. 3d, 280, p.724-755.)

5. See Gary Orfield, Must We Bus?, (The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1978, CHS 8,9,10,) for an excellent analysis and critique of the Federal Government's role in school desegregation.

6. 13 Weekly comp. of Pres. COC. 2001, (February 16, 1977; Joseph A. Califano, Jr., Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, HEW News Release, February 17, 1977.)

7. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools; A Status Report (February 1979, p.72).

8. L.A. Times, Part I, p.3., November 8, 1979.

9. Lopez-Lee, Dr. David, School Desegregation in The Los Angeles Unified School District. (Staff report, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Los Angeles, California, Dec. 1976, National Institute of Education).

10. L.A. Times, October 25, 1979, Part II, p.6.

11. L.A. Times, December 13, 1979, Part II, p.7.

12. L.A. Times, June 21, 1979, Part I, p.3.

13. L.A. Times, op cit. p.3.

14. L.A. Times, November 8, 1979, Part I, p.3.

15. John Caughey, To Kill a Child's Spirit (Itasca, Ill. 1973), 150-151. Charles M. Wollenberg, All Deliberate Speed, (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London), 178.

FOOTNOTES

16. L.A. Times, July 24, 1977.

17. L.A. Times, Dec. 16, 1977, Part I, p.3.

18. L.A. Times, May 25, 1978, Part II, p.8.

19. Ibid.

20. Jack McCurdy, "Wilson Riles'Clout in California",Integrated Education, Summer 1978, p.6.

21. McCurdy, op.cit. p. 2.

22. McCurdy, op.cit. p. 3.

23. See David Lopez-Lee, School Desegregation in the Los Angeles Unified School Disctrict. (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Staff Report, December 1976) for a detailed account of the organization of both the School Board and the Central Administration.

24. It is interesting to note that former L.A. Board Members Diane Watson and Robert Doctor opposed the district system as a method of insuring either a minority seat on the Board or as a means to prevent more anti-busing candidates on the Board. Interviews with Ms. Watson, 8-10-78; Dr. Doctor 7-24-77.

25. L.A. Times, Nov. 6, 1979.

26. Interview with Diane Watson, 8-10-78.

27. Interview with Dr. Robert Doctor, July 24, 1978.

28. Interview with Dr. Robert Doctor, July 24, 1978.

29. This position was strongly voiced by Charles Knox, Administrative Aide of Congressman Gus Hawkins. Interview July 22, 1978.

30. Bill Elkins, Special Assistant to Mayor Bradley in an interview conducted by the author in July 1978. Suggested that the "true test" of Mayor Bradley's leadership would hinge on his ability to pull people together, even in defense of the Mayor, Mr. Elkins underlines the moderate and conciliatory style of the Mayor's leadership.

31. Elkins Interview, July, 1977.

32. L.A. Times, Jan. 19, 1977.

FOOTNOTES

33. L.A. Times, Jan. 11, 1977, Jan. 19, 1977, Feb. 25, 1977, May 27, 1977.

34. Dr. Robert Doctor former L. A. School Board member in an interview conducted on July 24, 1978, indicated that Mayor Bradley had virtually abandoned him during his run-off election with San Fernando Valley anti-buser Bobbie Feidler. He felt that Bradley having won his Primary first and did not have to face a run-off, could have done considerably more to aid him in getting more black support.

35. Interview with Diane Watson, Aug. 10, 1977.

COMMUNITY POLITICS AND SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

All communities which make up the Los Angeles school district are involved in school desegregation but some communities have an interest and a stake in what constitutes school desegregation as a matter of priority. This section is about such groups.

The focus of this section is on the politics of blacks, chicanos, Jews and anti-busing groups in Los Angeles. This section, rather than detailing the myriad of social statistics often used to substitute for analysis of minorities, will instead focus on what is perceived to be realities of minority power and influence. Like everything written so far, what is to follow represents an asserted point of view of various groups and their impact on school desegregation, not a dispassionate discourse on the matter.

The striking thing about school-desegregation politics and minorities in Los Angeles is that minorities in general have little clout to wrench from the decision-making process those gains which several of their leaders may in a moment of heat assert or "demand" from governmental and non-governmental power.[1]

Minorities, and this means black for all practical purposes, are so dependent on white sources of money and organization that they exercise little or no leverage in striking public policy bargains. The weaker and poorer the community the more dependent will be its political leadership.

There is much talk of Community power within black and chicano

political circles, but up to now the evidence seems to suggest that there is little else than talk. What, then, are some of the reasons for this apparent political weakness within minority communities? What are the consequences, especially in the area of school desegregation?

The problem is not an easy one to deal with but let me attempt an answer. The first thing that strikes me about black and chicano communities is that they in fact do not constitute a community at all. Each of these communities in fact comprises a series of communities with a wide variety of political and social differences and interests.

The Black Community

First the so-called black community. Most serious observers of black communities have been aware of the myriad of social, economic and cultural differences that distinguish black communities across the United States. Too often, tensions and cleavages provided by these differences have absorbed vital and scarce resources in combating and mollifying their effects. The point not only is that the black community in Los Angeles exhibits differences, but that these social differences now define "separate" black communities and that these communities can be distinguished socially, economically and politically on the question of black desegregation.

The black population in Los Angeles, one of the largest in the

United States, also is one of the most diversified black populations in the country. The public-policy efforts of the Civil Rights movement, coupled with the "affirmative" response of the federal government during the 60's, have contributed to a real growth of a middle class. Los Angeles must be ranked with New York, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, Georgia, as sterling examples of the fact that some blacks have "made it". There is little question of this or the fact that many if not most blacks have not had the opportunity to move socially with the times. The effect is that the black community is bi-polar socially and economically.

Nowhere is this seen as clearly as in the Permits with Transportation program in Los Angeles which for all practical purposes is the Los Angeles school district's version of a voluntary desegregation program. The effects of the PWT program have been (1) to allow Westside white schools to meet desegregation guidelines; (2) rob minority communities of their most gifted students.

The program also has emphasized and reinforced the class differences among minorities. It is the black middle class that is transporting its children from middle class black neighborhoods to upper-middle class white neighborhoods. They are in fact refusing to send their children into black schools where lower-middle class children predominate. Their interests are, at bottom, not really too different from the staunchest anti-busing groups from the San Fernando Valley. Both groups seek, not equality, but a continuance of the

competitive advantage that stems from middle-class options.

The test of whether a people in fact comprise a community is whether people will operationalize their sense of identity and pool their limited and scarce resources. Blacks in Los Angeles do not do this. Those that can, run and disassociate themselves from the socially crippled many.

The fiction of a black community will nevertheless, be propogated both within the media (always to be assumed to be interested only in the simplest notions of social reality) and elites who live and die by such symbolism.

Any search for black-community leadership must be cognizant of the separateness of black communities and also the inherent contradictions in minority leadership. The vast political landscape of black communities does not reveal recognized black leaders who reflect something called the interests of the community. What is revealed is the existence of a series of baronies reflecting not only a long list of leadership styles but distinct constituencies to reflect that style. What community of interests is represented by Mayor Tom Bradley? By Councilmen Farrel, Cunningham, and Lindsey? By Congressman Hawkins? State Senators Greene, Ralph and Watson? The so-called powerful ministers of the largest black churches? By the N.A.A.C.P. attorneys in the Crawford Case? What passes as black leadership in Los Angeles is nothing more than a series of "local" leaders reflecting the interests of local black communities.

Blacks have demonstrated an appalling inability to organize their respective constituencies, let alone to demonstrate the organization and cohesiveness that is necessary to effect policy in desired ways. It should never be assumed that blacks are of one mind about school desegregation in Los Angeles. In fact, that is clearly not the case. Blacks differ fundamentally not only on the extent of desegregation but whether the concept itself is worth pursuing at all.[2] All of this is clear enough. What this essay purports, however, are some of the reasons for these differences. They stem less from differences of opinion than from different communities.

Regardless of the community, black leadership tends to reflect some common traits which provoke some consideration. One is struck by the sparseness of black leadership cadre as well as their lack of organizational support. Black leaders in Los Angeles, as a result of shallow resource bases, demonstrate little staying power over a long, exhausting struggle over desegregation policy. As a consequence, Black leadership can often be split even further than they already exist and weakened by concerted efforts of stronger, more cohesive adversaries.

This point was amply demonstrated when Howard Miller successfully splintered already splintered groups of black community leaders. The behind-the-scenes maneuvering of Mayor Bradley, the isolation of

Diane Watson and the N.A.A.C.P. attorneys, all contributed to the kind of shallow accommodation policies that are more characteristic of black leadership than otherwise.[3]

No one who is effectively a part of this decision-making process is fooled by the public posturing of minority leadership. In power relations, reputations are made not in how groups attract public attention, but in what concessions they are able to extract from their adversaries. The reality of black power leaves a great deal to be desired.

Another interesting illustration of the lack of minority power is seen within the coalition of civil rights lawyers who make up the team of petitioners in this case. Although the team of petitioners has been expanded since 1976 to include the N.A.A.C.P. and the Center for Law and Justice, one should not conclude that all three elements of the petitioner team exert the same amount of influence on decisions of legal strategy and organization of the case in court. The American Civil Liberties Union, the party initiating the suit in 1963, not only has more legal, organizational and financial resources to bring to this case but is recognized in several ways as the leader in this case. Most of the press coverage subtly reflects this tendency. Judge Egly's action in awarding court fees to the A.C.L.U. reflects this also. More importantly the petitioners themselves recognize that the A.C.L.U. not only had a proprietary interest in the case stemming from its long involvement, but the

means to get what it wanted when negotiating with others.

Contributing to the problems among the petitioner groups was the intensive war within the ranks of N.A.A.C.P. attorneys in the case. The N.A.A.C.P. has spread its influence and organization to include the largest and most difficult desegregation cases in the United States for the last 25 years. Its involvement in Crawford reflects the importance of the case. It also reflects an often-hidden reality of little coordination and leadership from Nate Jones, the National Legal Counsel as well as vicious in-fighting among black attorneys.[4]

Unfortunately for Los Angeles, the N.A.A.C.P. might have hurt its representation in this case when it hired two leading black law firms to represent them in this case. This not only opened up a source of disagreement over tactics and strategies to be applied in this case; it also provided the opportunity for petty rivalries and jealousies to develop into blood-letting political squabbles that drew precious energy away from the case. It is impossible to calculate the effect of the behind-the-scenes fights on the morale and effectiveness of subsequent N.A.A.C.P. representations. One thing was for certain; it hurt the school desegregation effort.

Two things, however, are clear. The initial problem seems to be in the selection of two firms to represent the N.A.A.C.P. Secondly, one would have hoped for quick action resolving the dis-

putes once they erupted. This was not done. In both instances the responsibility rested with Nate Jones.

The point of all of this is to illustrate the problems and tensions which one expects when different groups and organizations work together, presumably for their common good. Additionally, the costs were borne by a black leadership already denied an "equal opportunity" in the distribution of social resources.

Much of what has been said about blacks can apply to the single largest ethnic group in Los Angeles, the chicanos. In fact, the chicano population not only suffers from extreme centrifugal pulls within the community, but even more than blacks, they lack the sufficient social and political base for effective participation in Los Angeles politics generally and the politics of school desegregation specifically.[5] What follows here is a discussion of the political ramifications of the growth of the chicano population and its impact on school desegregation.

The Chicano Community and School Desegregation

No attempt is made here to depict such a heterogeneous people as the Chicano population in great detail.[6] There are some aspects of this fast-growing population group which have special import on the political process today and in the future as it affects school desegregation in Los Angeles. Perhaps the first and most important fact about the chicano community besides its growth rate is that

it is a highly fragmented community, or it is a collection of various communities in search of a common collective identity. What adds not only to its size and heterogeneity is the great and continuous influx of Mexicans from Mexico, many of whom are escaping the ravages of certain poverty in Mexico for the comparatively better economic opportunities of a marginal existence as a legal or illegal migrant worker. There are no reliable statistics on the rate of movement across the U.S.-Mexican border, but the consequences of this movement are beginning to assert themselves, oftentimes within the Chicano community itself. Mexicans from Mexico are <u>different</u> from chicanos who have in many cases lived in the United States for generations. Aliens not only come to the United States with a different culture, they make up that great bulk of cheap labor without which the agricultural, clothing and restaurant businesses would be economically accessible to only the wealthiest Americans. Mexican aliens likewise are becoming an economically competitive force <u>within</u> chicano communities as they compete for the scarce, "crummy" jobs which for too long have been the lot of Mexicans and other minorities. This new and growing economic competition is just now beginning to impact the community by fragmenting it even more than it already is. The trend is likely to continue because there are no effective national or state policies which are geared to stem this human tide. Outside of new economic and trade relationships

between Washington and Mexico City, not much will change in the future.

Added to the compounded pressures of foreign background and economic competition is ethnic isolation. Not only are Mexican Nationals isolated from the community at large, but there seems to be growing evidence that there is growing isolation from the rest of the chicano community. Like white society generally and black society specifically, the chicano middle-class population, though small in comparison with both Anglos and Blacks, seek the paths of upward mobility and escape from the life of poverty. The middle class not only seeks for itself hard-fought amenities but its upward mobility has removed from barrios necessary talent and organizational skill lacking in poorer communities. In fact, one of the most important demographic facts about chicanos is that upward mobility usually means literally leaving the city of Los Angeles and moving to smaller suburban communities in Los Angeles County outside the boundaries of the city and the school district. The chicano population is not isolated in the city proper. What may be occurring is the isolation of the poorest segments of the chicano population within the city.

Politically, chicanos, despite impressive population growth rates, are not a political force in city politics generally and school politics specifically, for several reasons. First, like most poor

populations, chicanos participate in politics at a very low level.

The often mentioned "culture of poverty", reinforced by cultural impediments (language, strong emotional ties to Mexico, and the negative effects of a strong Catholic Church), lies as a heavy weight on chicanos making only token political expression the norm. Added to this is a fragmented leadership just now emerging into something reselbling a community of political elites. Recent elections contesting school board seats have underlined the problems of poor organization and low voter turn-out. Richard Ferraro's victory in a heavily populated Chicano district in the June 1979 special election and the success of Thomas Bartman, one of Bustop's attorneys, who recently won a run-off election against the surviving chicano, Alberto Juarez,[7] are examples.

Besides the problems of community fragmentation and indigent political leadership, the chicanos have shown little interest in school desegregation, generally speaking. This seems quite understandable given the general character of chicano communities. Most community leaders have chosen instead to focus their attention and concern on bi-lingual and bi-cultural programs which many chicanos view to be more immediately relevant to them.

But the social realities of a legacy of cultural and economic isolation are beginning to be felt. Increasingly, chicano leadership will give evidence that the keys to the political kingdom lie not

with isolation, however appealing, but with interaction with the dominant community. Years will pass before this is achieved in any but the most superficial terms.

Chicanos, at this point in time, are bereft of any kind of representation on the school board in Los Angeles. This is likely to continue into the next few years. Many have said the same for the past even though a chicano, Julian Nava, a Harvard-trained professor of education at California State University at Northridge, served on the Los Angeles school board for twelve years.

Perhaps the most compelling criticism levelled at Dr. Nava has been that he lacked desire to consolidate his chicano constituency during that long a tenure on the school board. He failed, as one chicano lawyer-journalist stated, to identify with the interests of the chicano community and made the mistake of assuming that he was on the board on merit alone. He seemed not to have a clear sense of who he was as a chicano policy-maker, at least with respect to the barrio.[8]

During his last few months as a member of the school board, Julian Nava seemed at times much more interested with what he perceived to be excessive white flight than with the substance of issues affecting the chicanos. The most persistent rumor about board member Nava from the Chicano community was that there was an

attempt to kick him upstairs to possibly have him appointed to a high-ranking administrative position either in the State University or Community College. An attempt to have him appointed president of East Los Angeles Community College met with strong and persistent resistance from within the chicano community, a testimony to his community standing. What of the future?

If present demographic trends continue and there is every reason to believe that they will, chicanos will be the single largest ethnic group in Los Angeles, in Los Angeles County and in California as well. The future would appear bright for increased influence and power in local and state politics. But it is the political realities attached to anglo control which will have as much effect on the future of chicanos as their numbers. The problems of "community building" are never easy and always time-consuming. Chicano pressures for change will occur, but they will occur slowly and over time.

As far as school desegregation is concerned, expect that upward mobility will mean, as it does with the anglos and blacks, a move to where quality in education is perceived to take place. That should mean more chicano middle-class children having access to a middle-class school outside and away from the barrio. If the school district is allowed to have its way and opens up the PWT program, chicanos will join blacks and bus their children to the Western-most fringes of the

school district. Reality would suggest that whites will not reciprocate.

The Jewish Community and School Desegregation

Among the most important elements that make up the network of community groups affecting the course of school desegregation policy in Los Angeles, none is singly more important than the Jewish community. The actions of Jewish leadership in Los Angeles seem to symbolize a contradiction in terms of the same community being both for and against desegregation, specifically mandatory busing to achieve desegregation.

The contradiction exists only if one assumes a monolithically organized Jewish community, which of course is the furthest thing from the truth, at least in Los Angeles. This section will explore some of the different social and political currents that flow through the Jewish community and relate them to the matter of public school desegregation in Los Angeles. There are in fact several Jewish communities in Los Angeles when social, economic and political realities are considered. These realities not only differentiate Jews from one another, but they help us understand the conflicts among Jews over the question of school desegregation. We are talking about not only the second largest Jewish community in the world, second only to New York, but one of the most influential communities in Los Angeles when it comes to public policy questions. It is the power and influence

of the Jewish community which is focused upon here. It is in this respect that Jews are different from other "minority" communities.

Today there are approximately 472,000 Jews living in Los Angeles. As mentioned earlier, this constitutes the second-largest Jewish population in the world, second only to New York, and larger than Tel Aviv. Like blacks, most Jews are concentrated in the city of Los Angeles itself and make up only 6% of Los Angeles County.[9]

Jews have one of the highest per-capita income levels in Los Angeles and comprise one of the best-educated, most productive and socially active citizens in the greater Los Angeles community.

What is not appreciated about the Jewish community is its heterogeneity - the existence of viable social and political differences which challenge the stereotype of a cohesive community. A few facts illustrate the point. Approximately 1 Jew in 5 goes to a synagogue. Of these, 1 out of 20 identify as Orthodox Jews. Ethnically speaking, Jews defy simple categorization. There are Jews of many national and racial backgrounds: Sephardis, Russian, German, etc. The religious component seems to be less significant in being identified as a Jew. Today the emphasis is ethnic and cultural. But having said this there is little agreement as to what constitutes the cultural identification. Perhaps it is at bottom a state of mind shared to some extent by those who choose to identify as a Jew.

Contrary to popular image, most Jews are not members of Jewish

organizations which speak in the name of the community, nor are they members of Synagogues that would guide them spiritually. Jews are united only, it would seem in that they should continue as a group but divided as to the cultural, social, and religious basis of that identity.

Politically, the traditional liberal political alliances are in disarray. It is not uncommon to see Jew pitted against Jew and Jew pitted against blacks and other minorities as was evidenced in the alighment over the deFrenes and Bakke cases, and where Los Angeles is concerned, strong disagreement and conflict over the course of mandatory busing. It is this latter issue which forms the current cutting edge of community relations in the greater Los Angeles area.

Before turning to this issue let me continue my discussion of the Jewish community as a whole, because understanding the essence of its organization and problems will be useful in coming to grips with conflicts over school busing.

Jews as a predominantly middle-class population are showing a marked population decline in Los Angeles County. From a high of 511,000 in 1968 Jews registered a low of 450,000 in 1978. Not only are Jewish birthrates declining but the population appears weighted toward older people. Coupled with this is the disturbing trend of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. In 1968 only 5% of the Jewish population fell into this category, while a whopping 40% was recorded in 1978. This striking trend may be more in evidence in Los Angeles than in the country

as a whole. Likewise, while only 25% of Los Angeles Jews belong to Jewish organizations, 40% do so nationally. Living in California, especially in Los Angeles where social ties of all sorts seem loose, has its special effects on the Jewish community as it does all communities.

Turning to economic and political matters, Jews are no longer content on focusing most of their energies in the entertainment and garment industries. The move has been largely to real estate, the professions and marginally into the financial power centers of banking.

Unlike the oldest Jewish community located at the turn of the century in the now predominantly chicano Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles and the generally middle-class Westside, Valley Jews, 150,-ooo strong, make up a new, more assimilated Jew in every respect. These are persons who moved into the San Fernando Valley in further search of the middle class dream: a larger single family home with room to spare further from the problems of the city. There is always a strong element of escapism in the whole idea of California. This is magnified even further in escaping to the Valley.

What is important about the Jewish population's move to the Valley is not the fact of it but the political consequences of it. It has been Jews residing in the San Fernando Valley who have assumed much of the organizational initiative in the anti-busing movement in Los Angeles.

It was there that Bobbie Feidler leveled her anti-busing guns at Dr. Robert Doctor, one of the most liberal and vulnerable board members when it comes to mandatory busing. His loss not only deprived minority-school children of a strong advocate, but also indicated the depth and center of gravity of the anti-busing sentiment. Bobbie Feidler, Alan Robbins, Roberta Weintraub, all San Fernando Valley residents, are not only Jewish and strong anti-busing advocates, but represent pointmen of a profound right-ward turn among Jews in Los Angeles. It would seem that Jewish privatism, a replacement of "self-interest" at the top of the agenda, has replaced Jewish universalism and liberalism. Although some reject the notion that Jews are becoming politically conservative, that argument, it would appear holds little water in light of how Jews have generally reacted to busing in Los Angeles.

The desegregation plan now in effect, the plan largely contrived by former School Board President Howard Miller, himself a gift from the internecine wars within the Westside Jewish community, was designed partially to impact the normally self-indulgent and politically quiescent San Fernando Valley. That, as it happened, turned out to be not only untrue but it led to the creation of a powerful community movement.

It is partially through this political prism that much of what is happening in California can be understood. Much but not all. There is the matter of mandatory busing and who it impacts. Bobbie Feidler

and her supporters simply will not stand by and watch their children be shipped to third rate education in racially and class-segregated schools. Everything we know about class, race, and social differentiation would auger against assuming another position. No longer can we assume that because someone is "Jewish" that a sympathetic, even more importantly, a committed position toward desegregation will be expected. Reality dictates otherwise.

The strong anti-busing response in the Valley is due to the fact that residents felt they had been "targeted" by Howard Miller's plan. The relatively quiet response of the Westside is due to the fact that Miller, working in tamdem with William Johnston and Mayor Bradley, co-opting a weak minority leadership, contrived the plan to excempt this politically powerful community. There is no anti-busing uproar on the Westside because for the most part Westside schools meet the School District's definition of what constitutes a desegregated school.

That there is an internecine war among Valley Jews and Westside Jews was given some credibility by Bobbie Feidler herself when she stated in an interview in July 1978 with the author that the Board plan did virtually excempt the rich Westside. What Bobbie Feidler indicated was the fact that there are several communities of interest among Jews and that hers would be heard from in the future. She has kept her word.

In some ways much of what will happen in the way of school desegregation will be decided as a result of a Civil War between Jewish communities, not on the basis of one being pro or con, but on the basis of on

whom will most of the burden fall. But isn't that what much of politics is about? The school desegregation plan as it was presented to the community was first and foremost a political document, not a master plan either for quality education or district-wide desegregated education.[10]

One last word on Jewish interests and desegregation. Many of those who have assumed leadership in desegregating Los Angeles public schools are in fact Jews, Jews who man the many private and semi-private organizations and are lawyers representing the American Civil Liberties Union as the lead petitioner in the Crawford case. Their commitments in time, money, and energy must be underlined always. But, as the point of this essay suggested, they no longer represent the center of gravity of Jewish commitment. Those that struggle for quality in desegregated education represent a "minority" position within their communities. The tide has indeed turned right-ward.

Blacks, Chicanos and Jews:

A Final Note on Political Coalition:

Because the Los Angeles School District is two-thirds minority one should not leap to the conclusion that grand ethnic coalitions are imminent. There are enough signs to caution a too optimistic conclusion. There is in fact a distinct and vital difference which separates Jews and blacks generally when it comes to political interests. Blacks are poorer than Jews - a simple fact, but often ignored by too many observers

when attempting to focus on relations between the commhnities. Differences in the economic center of gravity between the communities obviously does not come close to covering all that distinguishes blacks and Jews. But it comes close to touching the economic bedrock upon which rests political differences. In point of fact most blacks and most Jews cannot be expected to continue to form coalitional arrangements. That means, of course, that ethnic political leaders who build and maintain their positions of leadership within the base of the communities will not be inclined toward coalitions which extend beyond ethnic categories. The centrifugal pulls of class and ethnic differentiation will be too much.

The same situation exists between Jews and chicanos generally speaking. What class and ethnicity separates, political coalitions can not easily bridge. Blacks and chicanos would appear to have the best chances for coalitions given the argument thus far. Again, class differentiation seems to be a less significant variable between the two. There are, however, other factors which make coalition arrangements between black and chicano organizations unlikely in the near future.

First, the chicano leadership is not only highly fragmented, representing a melange of community interests, but it is relatively new and still engaged in solidifying a sense of chicano collective identity.[11]

Another factor preventing immediate coalition arrangements between blacks and chicanos concerns the matter of ethnic competition and unfortunately racism. Two strong undercurrents which are not often discussed but may in the long run determine the relationship between the communities. The chicano population as was noted previously is literally spreading throughout the southern Canifornia basin. Much of that movement has been into previously all-black areas of South Central and South Los Angeles. The expected hostilities between the two groups, hostilities which have a long history in Los Angeles and which have erupted periodically in gang warfare in the San Fernando Valley, continue to hang over the two communities.

Coupled with this are the unmistakable signs of racist expression on each side of the ethnic fence. Many blacks are concerned that their brief period as the most important racial minority is fast coming to an end. Many chicanos recognize that a new day is coming, one in which chicanos will supplant blacks as the most representative minority group within the city, school district, the County and the State. Time is certainly on the chicano's side.[12]

I would expect that black leadership will resist political dominance by chicanos. I would also expect that chicanos will find fewer incentives to forge coalitions with blacks, especially black leaders whose constituents are in head-to-head contact with the new wave of chicanos.

Coalitions are possible with those chicano groups and organizations which are based less on "community" interests and more on advancing the interests of the middle class. Relative to desegregation interests, expect the kinds of coalitions that are made by the so-called active strata within different ethnic communities, those strata not caught within the tugs and pulls of lower class and ethnic interests. Expect middle class political activists to continue to forge coalitions based upon common or mutually agreed upon interests. Recent support of black leadership for a chicano on the school board and continued chicano and Jewish support for Tom Bradley suggest not only the past but continued patterns of coalition arrangements.

There will be challenges in the near future to these arrangements. The upcoming mayoralty race could pit Westside Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky as the main opponent to Tom Bradley. This could ignite the contagion of ethnic hostilities that could consume the election process and smoulder deeply for years to come. Recent chicano candidates for the school board have taken a soft view on school desegregation, especially mandatory busing. Much of this has been pure expedience, some a recognition of community preferences for bilingual/bicultural interests. The net effect of these positions may be to further separate black leadership support from chicano attempts to get on the school board.

There is, then, much to be concerned about and much in the way of

speculating about the future that is unknown. One thing is for certain, it will be exciting.

The kinds of coalitions that are likely to occur will be entered into primarily by segments of communities which have similar social and political interests and which are not mired in ethnic and lower-class interests within their respective communities. What does this portend for coalitions of different kinds of people who make up the poorer strata of these communities? Not much appears on the political landscape which will bridge the cleavages and the differences which exist among them.

While it has been virtually impossible to distinguish race from class interests when dealing with blacks and chicanos in the past, that time is fast coming to an end. Class differences do seem to be emerging so significantly that to disregard them may do more injustice to the interests of the poorer strata than otherwise believed.

Coalitions of interests forged to fight for and implement effective desegregation in Los Angeles would appear not present in the immediate future of Los Angeles. The poorest minorities will remain poor and isolated.

FOOTNOTES

COMMUNITY POLITICS AND SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

1. Interview with Marnesba Tackett, President of Southern Christian Leadership Conference - West (SCLC-West) July 11, 1978.

2. Interview with Charles Knox, Administrative Aide of Congressman Gus Hawkins, July 12, 1978.

3. Interview with Diane Watson, August 10, 1978.

4. Interview with Harold C. Hart-Nibbrig, former N.A.A.C.P. counsel in Crawford, August 16, 1979.

5. Interview with David Ochoa, August 2, 1978.

6. Much of the material here was gathered from extensive interviews with David Ochoa, Attorney, television reporter and producer; Dr. Carlos Haro, Director of the Chicano Studies Department, U.C.L.A.; Frank Del Omo and George Ramos, Los Angeles Times Reporters; Dr. David Lopez-Lee, Professor of Public Administration, University of Southern California; and Mrs. Grace Davis, Assistant to Mayor Tom Bradley.

7. Los Angeles Times, February 6, 1980, Part I, p.1.

8. David Ochoa, Interview, August 1, 1978.

9. Most of the material used here is derived from Robert Scheer's "The Jews of Los Angeles", published in the Los Angeles Times, January 29th and 30th, 1978, and from a Los Angeles Times article focused on recent sociological research conducted at U.C.L.A. See Beverly Bezette, "Is L.A. Swallowing Up Its Jewish Community"? L.A. Times, Part IV, p.1, November 2, 1979.

10. Bill Boyarsky,"Politics Determines Shape of Plan", Los Angeles Times, October 3, 1977, Part II, p.1.

11. David Ochoa, Interview, August 2, 1978.

12. Carlos Haro, Interview, July 21st, 1978.

METROPOLITAN DESEGREGATION

This section focuses attention on some of the problems and prospects of interdistrict or metropolitan desegregation in Los Angeles. While fundamental demographic, economic (fiscal) and organizational changes have occurred in California generally and Los Angeles specifically, indicating the necessity for a metropolitan solution in order to desegregate public schools, the prospects for a political solution are dim. (See Figure 5). In fact, neighboring school districts surrounding Los Angeles have already begun taking what they believe are necessary steps in order to block any interdistrict movement of their school children. The time, money, and effort expended to move the gargantuan L.A.U.S.D. should cause us to dim our optimism for a metropolitan solution in the near future. With these points in mind, what are the imperatives for metropolitan desegregation? Before answering this question, it should be kept in mind that if there is, in fact, a metropolitan plan designed in the greater Los Angeles area, it will reflect the dominant political forces involved in the political designation process itself. Those fundamental questions of "who gets what, when, and how?" will necessitate a political analysis of metropolitanism.

What then are the imperatives for metropolitan desegregation? First of all, it is clear for anyone who cares to look that the Los Angeles Unified School District is, for all practical purposes, a minority school district.

As noted previously in this monograph, for the first time in its

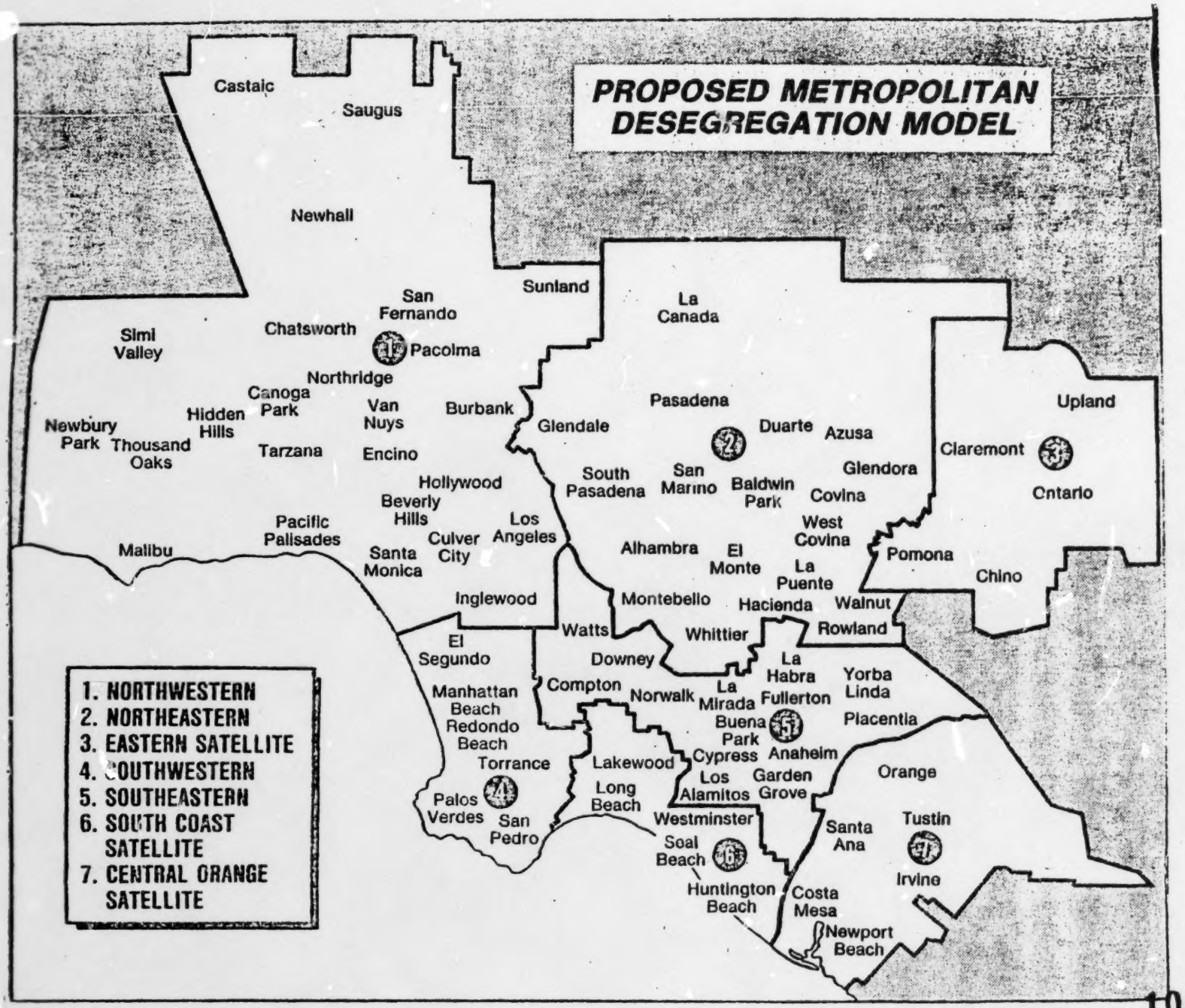


Figure 5. POSSIBLE METROPOLITAN DESEGRATION PLAN

Source: Los Angeles Times, Part I, p. 3, January 21, 1979.

history, the white school-age population has dipped below 30 percent of the district's total enrollment. By far, the real growth in the school system is not only minority but chicano. Today, chicano school children compose approximately 38 percent of all of the District's pupils with blacks holding steady at approximately 24 percent. The collectivity of Asians and "others" makes up the remainder.

These population trends, reinforced by existing segregated housing patterns which exist in the greater Los Angeles metropolitan region, underscore the depth of the problem. Within the district itself, the white population tends to be concentrated on the Western fringes of the district and within the San Fernando Valley. The San Fernando Valley not only has a predominantly white population, but also is home and work for at least 75 percent of the senior white teachers in the district. Black and chicanos occupy the great central, Southwestern and Eastern portions of the Los Angeles Basin. The chicano population, historically dominant in the Eastern portion of Los Angeles, is spreading throughout the Central basin into areas formerly housing blacks. Chicanos will undoubtedly be the most widespread population group in Los Angeles within a decade.

What is happening within the boundaries of the Los Angeles School District is also happening within Los Angeles County and California generally. A declining white population is living apart from rapidly growing minority populations, especially chicanos. For all practical purposes, apartheid society is supporting apartheid school systems.

Another fundamental change in the demography of this regional district is the changing age structure within the population groups. In a nutshell, what is happening is this: the white population simply is not having as many children, which means, among other things, that they are faced with the additional problem of school closures in their neighborhoods. Middle-class white neighborhoods are simply having fewer school-age children in the lower grades, K-9. This means that most anglo neighborhood schools have most of their students concentrated at the higher grades.

This is the reverse of what is happening in minority neighborhoods and communities. While middle-class minorities do tend to reflect a national trend of having fewer children, there are more minority children in Los Angeles schools and they are more numerous at the lowest grades. That trend will probably continue into the foreseeable future.

The decline in the white enrollment does not mean that costs will necessarily go down commensurately. In fact, the opposite is likely to occur. There are innumerable fixed costs inherent in operating schools (administration, maintenance, etc.) which cannot be obviated. The removal of teachers to reflect enrollment decline amounts to little savings because those likely to remain are most often the most senior teachers and administrators in the schools and thus the highest paid.

Given these present and continuing population trends, one finds it difficult to justify not only the existences of some schools, but also whole school districts. Suburban, middle-class school districts like the Palos Verdes and El Segundo School Districts may not, in fact,

remain in existence in their present form if present trends continue.

An already bad fiscal situation has been made even worse by the passage of Proposition 13 and the resultant fewer tax dollars derived from property taxes. Local school districts have in fact become appendages of the state. A de facto trend was accelerated when voters, in effect, voted their local governments, including school districts, as fiscal wards of the state. Localism is but a hollow rallying cry given these trends.

The greater involvement of the state may lead eventually toward a more forceful imposition of a constitutional norm of equity throughout the schools within the state. That may be the case in the distant future. But for now, and in the foreseeable future, the political system will reflect the interests of those who dominate its seats of power and decision-making. Minorities and the resource-poor should expect little initially from what some undoubtedly presume as a brighter day ahead through metropolitanism.

With a declining birthrate and bi-polar age structure among California's white population, coupled with a literal explosion of chicano school-age children, the demographic die has been cast. Whites will endeavor to use every opportunity to protect upper-middle and middle-class educational enclaves. The grotesquery of this "crazy quilt" metropolitan system is apparent within the Los Angeles School District where we see schools which are hard-pressed to fill classrooms existing alongside schools with criminally overcrowded classrooms.

Outside the boundaries of the Los Angeles School District, the proliferation continues.

It would seem that some kind of interdistrict relief (an unfortunate term) is in order. Whether a metropolitan solution is politically possible remains an item for discussion, but regardless of the political realities the demographic, fiscal, and organizational changes will continue and will eventually define the limits of what has to be done.

These forces are in some respects operating independently of the issue of desegregation. In some respects one would think that they make desegregation more attractive. At this point they obviously don't! The white middle and upper middle classes are willing to pay the piper in order to remain segregated.

I predict that race and class segregation will continue under the banner call of local control, which has become a familiar justification for the existence of local school systems. The arguments are familiar enough: local school systems are more responsive to the wishes of the local communities, they add a pluralism to education. They give access and input to people living in local communities. In light of the centralizing effects of Proposition 13 and the Serrano Decision these are hollow echoes of yesterday's realities.

But what does localism mean in actuality? What does it mean for poor Compton to maintain its integrity as a local school district? It is poor, black (becoming chicano) and isolated! Beverly Hills, on the other hand, is an independent school district, wealthy by any standard, but now finds that where in the past it could foot 80% of its school

bill, it now limps to Sacramento for state assistance as a fiscal indigent. What does it mean to be a locally responsive school district if policy is made at the state level?

What does it mean to have a more responsive local system in Compton or East Los Angeles once the issues of bilingual or bicultural education are raised? Black and chicano control of poor, racially isolated school systems is an empty prize indeed. Some minorities have come to realize that the clarion call of community control of the early 1960's amounted, in reality, to less access and control of governing institutions which affect them directly.

Under these circumstances, poor, local districts are not responsive to their constituents. It is pure fiction to think otherwise.

Likewise, having black and brown faces "in control" of local school districts may contribute to yet further problems. Those who occupy such positions are likely to have investments in the status quo. Real jobs, status, and influence within a community are the rewards of those who maintain the status quo. Recent experiences in the South as well as in third world countries suggest the reality of that.

An economy on a downturn, with declining job opportunities, adds yet another element.

Finally, such local leaders are likely to act as mediators between the outside political world and their constituencies. The losers in the political bargains are likely to be racial minorities, especially the poorest segments of minority populations. It's an old, but effective, ploy.

Of course, this assumes that local leaders have nothing but their own self-interests at heart, rather than those of their people. Surely there must be leaders who act and believe differently.

The arguments for localism have evaporated. Economic and political realities define our existence as they usually do.

What then is the political future of metropolitan solutions?

THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN LOS ANGELES

In a few weeks, Judge Paul Egly will conclude the long, exnausting hearings before him and after a period of reflection will tell the Los Angeles School Board what it must do in order to meet the Constitutional mandate laid down in Crawford.

Although no one at this point knows for sure exactly what the judge will order, much speculation follows these lines. It appears likely that Judge Egly, having hired a specialist to help him draft a new plan for Los Angeles, will lean toward a plan that divide the sprawling Los Angeles school district into several small self-contained desegregation units.[1] Busing would presumably take place within the desegregation units and not between them. (See Figure 6). The fate of magnet schools within each subdivision and the permits with transportation program (PWT), the so-called voluntary desegregation program, is not known. One would presume, however, that magnet schools, which do little to further desegregation, will be disbanded. Likewise, PWT will likely remain where it contributes to school desegregation, but presently approximately 18,500 students are affected by PWT, most of whom are black.

It is likely also that a new desegregation plan will include grades 1-12, excluding only kindergarten.

Attorneys representing the plaintiffs continue to press Egly for the fullest use of mandatory busing. Expectedly the board's lawyers will argue an opposing position. One gets the impression that all arguments have been heard and that having made up his mind, Judge Egly

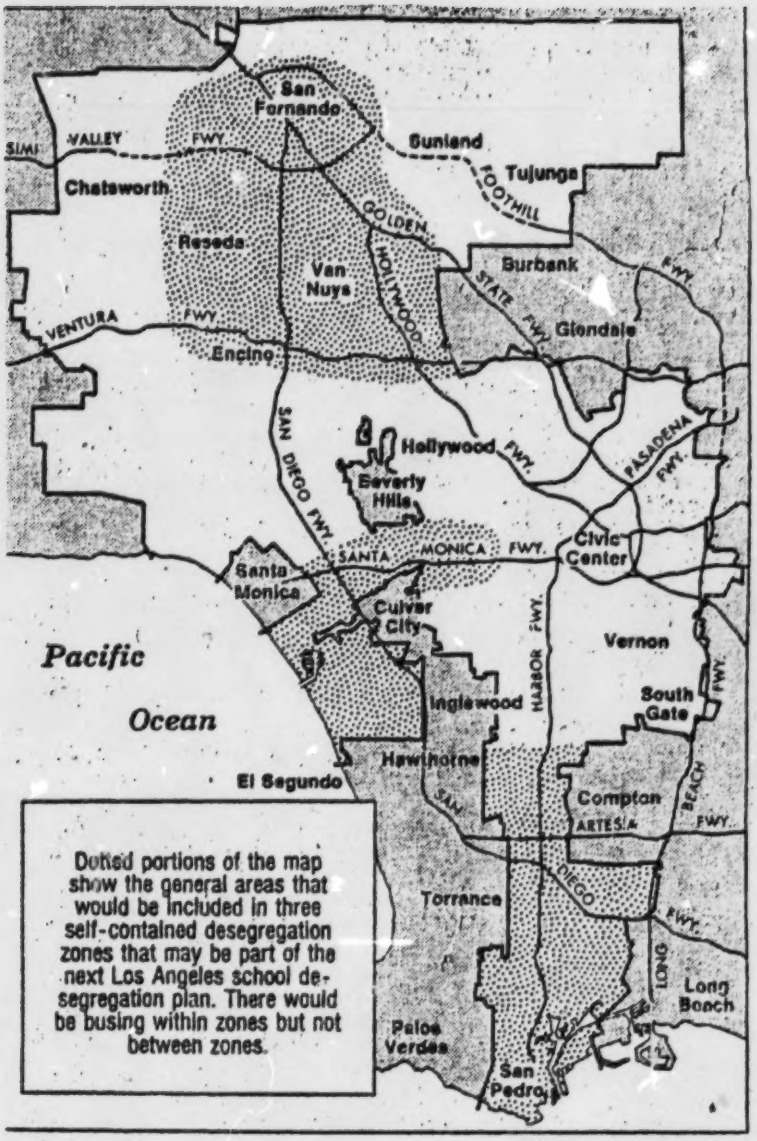


Figure 6.

Source: Los Angeles Times, December 24, 1979, Part II, p. 1.

has now set about the task of defining his implementation order which he wants to make in time for the fall term.

Regardless of what the judge orders, it is likely that his order will be appealed. The plaintiffs will appeal if the desegregation order makes little or no headway in desegregating the most isolated minority schools. The school board will most likely appeal if mandatory busing is further extended to include more white students.

Looming the the immediate future are possible legal moves to institute some kind of interdistrict relief between Los Angeles and neighboring school districts. The prospects for a quick legal solution to metropolitan desegregation are dim especially in light of the overwhelming passage of Proposition 1, the antibusing referendum. The most difficult political battles are yet to be encountered.

This monograph concludes where it began. The issue of school desegregation has proved to be one of the most intractable social and political problems to be confronted. Its resolution is made even more difficult today as we witness a deepening conservative political tide sweeping away the fragile underpinnings of yesterday's legal and political victories. School desegregation now joined with Proposition 13 fever suggest two reasons for the deep rightward turn that so many write and talk about. There is not only a turning away from the plight of the poor but a new kind of legitimacy for doing it: self-interest in a world of diminishing hopes and more competition for scarce opportunities. Tomorrow promises less for those who have the least.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Los Angeles Times, Part II, p. 1, December 24, 1979; Los Angeles Times, Part I, p. 3, February 15, 1980.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTERVIEWS:

Davis, Grace, Assistant to Mayor Tom Bradley.

Del Omo, Frank, Los Angeles Times reporter.

Doctor, Dr. Robert, former member of Los Angeles School Board.

Elkins, Bill, Special Assistant to Mayor Tom Bradley.

Feidler, Bobbie, member of Los Angeles School Board.

Haro, Dr. Carlo, Director of Chicano Studies Department, U.C.L.A.

Hart-Nibbrig, Harold, former N.A.A.C.P. counsel.

Knox, Charles, Administrative Aide to Congressman Gus Hawkins.

Lopez-Lee, David, Professor of Public Administration, University of Southern California.

Ochoa, David, attorney, televion reporter and producer.

Ramos, George, Los Angeles Times reporter.

Tackett, Marnesba, President of Couthern Christian Leadership Conference - West.

Watson, Diane, California State Senator and former member of Los Angeles School Board.

OTHER SOURCES:

Califano, Joseph A., Jr., Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, HEW News Release, February 17, 1977.

Caughey, John. To Kill a Child's Spirit. F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., Itasca, Illinois, 1973.

Caughey, John, and Laree. School Segregation on Our Doorstep: The Los Angeles Story. Quail Books, Los Angeles, 1966.

Crawford, Mary Ellen, as Minor, etc., et al, Plaintiffs and respondents v. Los Angeles Board of Education, Defendant and appellant. A. 30485, Supreme Court of California, June 28, 1978. (California Reporter, 17 Col. 3d, 280, p. 724-755.)

Farley, Reynolds. Report to the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, on Case #822 854, Crawford vs. Los Angeles School Board November 14, 1978.

Lopez-Lee, David, School Desegregation in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Staff report, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, December 1976, National Institute of Education.

Los Angeles Times. Selected issues 1977-1980, especially articles by William Trombley during this period.

McCurdy, Jack. "Wilson Riles' Clout in California," Integrated Education, Summer 1978, pp. 2-8.

Orfield, Gary. Must We Bus? The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1978.

Pettigrew, Thomas. Report to the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, on Case # 822 854, Crawford vs. Los Angeles School Board, November 14, 1978.

Thirteen Weekly comp. of Pres. COC. 2001, February 16, 1977.

Trombley, William, Lecture, "The Los Angeles Desegregation Plan," May 16, 1979, as part of a series on the Politics of School Desegregation in Los Angeles. Course taught by Nand Hart-Nibbrig, Ph.D., University of Southern California, Spring, 1979.

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Degegregation of the Nation's Public Schools: A Status Report. Washington, D. C., February, 1979.

Wollenberg, Charles. All Deliberate Speed. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978.